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*A Journal of Christian Education
and Church Work*

DECEMBER, 1937

Vol. XIII

No. 12



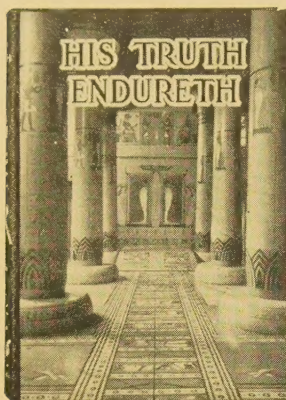
I think the skies were blue that night,
The angels' voices pearly hued;
The lambs were white and soft and warm,
The shepherds' voices calm, subdued.

Through the same silver silence of starlight,
Which beckoned the shepherds away,
May we, o'er the din of our busy lives,
"Peace on earth" hear the angels say.

—Iola Elliott Ueblacker.

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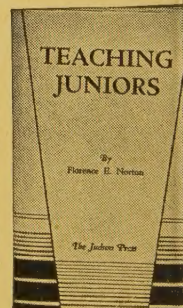
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ADULT LEADER

Vol. XIII

DECEMBER, 1937

No 12

MILES W. SMITH

Editor-in-Chief Sunday School Publications

MITCHELL BRONK

Editor of ADULT LEADER

Published Monthly by
THE AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
(THE JUDSON PRESS)

OWEN C. BROWN, Executive Secretary

ELVIN L. RUTH, Treasurer

HARVEY E. CRESSMAN, Business Manager

1701-1703 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

Boston Chicago Los Angeles
Kansas City Seattle Toronto

PRICES: Single copy, \$1.00 per year; in quantities, 20 cents per quarter, 80 cents per year.

Entered as second-class matter December 7, 1917, at the post-office at Philadelphia, Pa., under Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on July 3, 1918.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

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The Christmas Picture

That so many diverse features enter into the Nativity picture has always been regarded as in a certain way prophetic of the universality of the gospel of the Lord Jesus who was coming into the world. The starry heavens and the angel host would represent the divineness, the miserable stable accouchement-chamber and the lowly estate of the Galilean mother would foretell that he was to be the Saviour also of peasants and common folks. The Magi would stand for the wisdom of the ages that was to find and honor in his Evangel truth at its highest, the shepherds the ease with which the unlettered would lay hold at that saving philosophy. "All things to all men"; "Unsearchable riches"; "The fulness of Him that filleth all in all"; "What a wonderful Saviour is Jesus, my Lord!" are notes of the Nativity message that have never proven false.

The Christmas Force

Involved in this universality, and its full implication, is the unifying force of the Christian gospel. This

force has always been active, at work in the world, from the very beginning. It has had to struggle against the centrifugal drive of all that is not Christian, the enmities and jealousies of human hearts, the pride and ambition of nations, and the selfishness of wealth and power. Nevertheless, it has unified wondrously, and is doing it today, however hard lack of faith and religious pessimism at times find it to believe this, or in the face of pronounced setbacks.

Wars and Rumors of Wars

As this is being written one might say that unity and peace, that are inherent in the gospel, between persons and classes and nations, are nowhere in sight; it is clash and strife and ill-will on wide stretches of the world's life. In Asia, Japan and China at war; in Europe, the civil conflict in Spain; in America, employer and employee at sword's points. Partly to offset this, indeed, we might mention the splendid fraternity of the recent great conferences at Oxford and Edinburgh, where more than forty diverse factions of the church universal met to discuss their problems; or such brotherly movements as the National Conference of Jews and Christians.

Christmas, 1937

We have in mind, however, more particularly the Christmas celebration that is at hand. You may say what you will of the Christmas festival—its untoward features, its secular trappings, its pagan residua, its fabulous garnitures, its commercialism and frequent desecrations—nevertheless Christmas is a focal point around which at least once a year center the good and true and holy forces, thoughts, emotions of mankind. Whatever they may do other times or otherwise, on this anniversary they are induced to leave strife, hatred and selfishness and join in the popular chorus, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem!" The Babe is forever there in the manger, and men may not forget that he is. There are Japanese Christians and Chinese Christians; Christian Loyalists in Spain and Christian followers of Franco; millions of Christians in godless Russia; black men, white men, yellow men everywhere, good, bad and indifferent, who will this Christmas Day, in one way or another, be going back to the little town of Bethlehem. In any case, the visit will be a blessing.

The Criticism that Is Faultfinding

Criticism is one of the curses of church work; which doesn't imply that church-workers shouldn't often criticise their fellow workers—things that are done, procedures, methods—and expect themselves to be criticised. They should and we should. Criticism is salubrious and edifying. It belongs to our Christian

gospel. For every Christian is his brother's keeper, is in duty bound to keep other people's eyes open to their faults. Jesus tells us plainly how and in what spirit to do it. He didn't mean that we shouldn't be splinter-pullers for our friends and neighbors; he merely cautioned against the hypocrisy that indulges in the practice but never upon oneself. The point is, you can't fairly appraise another's faults when your vision is distorted by a lot of your own.

Try It Yourself!

In the specifications for a new house that he was building a friend of mine found the item thirty-seven dollars for planing the oak floor of a not large dining-room. He began to tell around that the builder was "getting into" him, was a gouger. Hearing which the builder suggested to my friend, who was a reputed good amateur carpenter, that he could save the thirty-seven dollars by planing the floor himself, evenings. It was a happy idea. But two hours on his knees the first evening, with planes and scrapers, compelled my friend to stay home from his office work the next day with stiff joints—and he had made only a slight impression on that floor. He concluded that that thirty-seven dollars was the fairest priced thing in the whole

construction. There is an old anecdote of the theological-seminary professor who curtly suggested to a student who remarked that he didn't see anything very original or remarkable in the Proverbs of Solomon "Sit down and try to write some more like them!"

A Cure for Unjust Criticism

A church treasurer said to me: "I'm tired of hearing Deacon So-and-So fuss about the financial management of our church. There's only one thing that will stop it and cure him, elect him in my place." One of the most profitable exercises of the imagination is imagining not simply how you would do things in a place, but, in particular, how you would face or overcome the difficulties that *he* all the time confronts. I rarely hear preachers depreciate sermons to which they have listened—they know all too well how unbelievably difficult it is, even with the Spirit's assistance, to preach any kind of sermon. You say "Why doesn't Superintendent Blank build up our Sunday school?" Well, you try it! You argue that you are not fitted for such service. Well, who is? He is trying, and if there is any class of people in the world who should be treated with charity and patience it is those who are trying.

CHRISTMAS AGAIN

By Daniel Heitmeyer, Fargo, North Dakota

There's a haunting spell of beauty in the
hollows and the hills;
There's a hush upon the cities and the
factories and mills;
There's a stillness on the waters where the
nations' navies ride,
And a sense of something holy more than
arrogance and pride.

There's a silence on the cannon at their watch
along the walls,
And the kings and captains ponder in the
palaces and halls.
The revelry is muffled in the spangled haunts
of sin,
And a golden cadence rises through the
strident pagan din.

For again the angel chorus sings the deathless
glory song
Of good-will and human kindness and the end
of strife and wrong.

And the stars in burning splendor as they
walk the ages round
Clash all their brazen cymbals to prolong the
joyous sound.

From fields and mines and forges where the
workers toil and sweat;
From reeking, crowded hovels where the
starving children fret;
From shops where money-changers count
percentages and gains;
From dim-lit wards of suffering, from homes
where sorrow reigns

Come voices anxious, ardent, keen with
longing of the years;
Charged with eager hopes of gladness to
dispel the fog of fears—
Voices vibrant, wistful, asking, "Shall the
world be born anew?"
And the heavens answer, "Patience, for the
dreams of God come true."

“The Birth of Jesus”

(See Lesson for December 19, 1937)

By JOHN SNAPE, D. D., Los Angeles, California

Morlais Jones tells of a famous picture of logs blazing in a fireplace. One cold winter day a pet monkey from the household wandered into the room and, seeing the picture, ran up to it and lifted its shivering hands to the painted blaze. After a few moments the monkey began to whine and moan with disappointment and misery. Poor little monkey! The longer he waited the colder he became, for the canvas was cold, and the flames were only painted flames.

Philanthropy, charity, morality, music, art, architecture, eloquence, justice, reform, statesmanship are all painted values upon the cold canvas of humanity's heart until set ablaze by the spirit that was set free when Christ came into the world, at that season that now bears his name, *Christ-mas*.

Saint Nicholas is a Dutchman—the patron saint of children, coming to us in legend from Holland. Kriss Kringle is a German, the name being a corruption of *Christkindlein*, meaning “Little Christ-Child.” He is the good genius of Christmas. Santa Claus is an Anglicized Saint Nicholas. But the fact is that Santa Claus, or Saint Nicholas, or Kriss Kringle, belongs to no single nation—he is the personification of cosmopolitan good-will to the children of every nation.

I went over one December day to a San Francisco dock to see some friends sail for China. I noticed the sailors carrying into the ship a Christmas tree. I knew that somewhere between Honolulu and Yokohama my friends would be observing Christmas with many passengers of many nationalities, just as in America we should be observing it with trees and illuminations and the exchange of gifts and a tender thought about the little Christ-Child.

On a recent Christmas America had the opportunity of an international hook-up to broadcast a message across the continent, and on to Honolulu, Japan and China. What do you think was the character of that half-hour of Christmas broadcast, from eight-thirty to nine o'clock in the morning? What an opportunity for Christian America to broadcast the spirit and meaning of Christmas to unchristian nations!

There was just a half-hour, and this was the program (twelve numbers in thirty minutes): Five numbers were occupied in telling about the greatness of the occasion and several numbers by a Japanese musical company. The other seven were a chorus, “Should I?”; then a male trio in two numbers (a) “St. Louis Blues,” (b) “Stein Song” with orchestra and chorus; orchestra, “A Cheerful Little Miss”; male trio, in two numbers, (a) “U. S. and Com-

pany,” (b) “I Miss a Little Miss”; closing number by orchestra, “Running Wild.”

A friend of mine, to whom I am indebted for the outline of this program, said, “Is this the only message America has for the world at a time like this”? And I ask, “Is this America's conception of the story that ought to be told at Christmastime”?

The world of Christ's day needed, and the world of our day needs, a new spirit. I saw in Rome, Italy, a bronze statue of a wolf with a crafty and savage face, with the two brothers, Romulus and Remus, feeding on its milk. Romulus, as you know, was the mythical founder of Rome. Feeding on wolf's milk, humanity naturally developed a wolf spirit.

Is that spirit not, also, characteristic of our time? Are not men and nations ready now to snarl and bite and mangle and destroy like wolves? As the business world is today constituted, are not many business men merely human wolves? Are we not living now in a day when the careless tossing of a word, one single flaming word, into the powder-magazine of the world's discontent and distrust may cause the nations to break out into a conflagration that will consume civilization? And is this not the Christmas of all Christmases when we need to apprehend and convey, as never before, the Christmas spirit?

Are we any better right now in America than were the citizens of ancient Herculaneum and Pompeii? I have walked the once-buried streets of Pompeii—streets that had been buried under thirty feet of volcanic ash; I saw the marks of chariot-wheels, cut into the flagstones of the narrow streets. I saw the skeletons of prisoners and officers shackled together and strangled together amidst the fumes and for centuries preserved in ashes. I saw the skeletons of dogs, twisted into fantastic shapes showing the agony in which they had died. But I saw more! I saw the evidences of ancient art—and ancient vice; rich houses—and defiled inmates; beauteous statues—and vicious sculptures; the cultivated intellect—with the darkened conscience. All that I saw in ancient Pompeii can be seen today in New York or Philadelphia or Chicago or Seattle or San Francisco or Los Angeles.

What does this old world need at this moment more than any other one thing? Does it need something in connection with business, or domesticity, or education, or economics, or finance, or government, or health, or humanitarianism, or science, or reform, or religion?

(Concluded on page 365)

The World Conference at Oxford¹

By ABBE LIVINGSTON WARNSHUIS, D.D.

Secretary, International Missionary Council, New York

For two weeks in July some four hundred men and women sent by the Christian churches of the world lived and worked together in the colleges of the University of Oxford, England. They came from at least forty-five countries, for the purpose of sharing their thought and experience in trying to find how the church might more fully realize its aim in the midst of the distracted world of today. Some of the profoundest scholars now living were there, and practical workers of every sort, laymen widely known as statesmen, and about one hundred young people shared this fellowship. What are the results?

The church was the central theme of the conference. What really is the church? What is its duty, and how can it give good service in a hostile world?

"Community" is a word that we hardly understand in America, where it suggests our town or neighborhood. But in other lands it is used to mean the people of the nation, who share common ideals and purposes and seek to develop a united life. By state we mean the organized nation, which by its government upholds law and order and ministers to the life of the people united within or under it. Church, community and state, the relations between these three in the world, these were the problems with which the conference wrestled.

A tense, realistic earnestness characterized the discussions, for there were too many people present who had lost and sacrificed much and who were not interested in idle day-dreams. Twenty million people in an era of unemployment are being kept alive by the manufacture of the instruments of death in a mad race of armaments aiming at national security but heading for national disaster and world anarchy. God has been dethroned; man is giving himself to self-glorification; and disillusionment, following wave after wave of frustrated idealistic hopes, is leading people to surrender authority over all life into the hands of the nation-state, with its symbolic head, the dictator. Wherever the state claims to establish a theology or a principle of education, or tries to organize conscience, there is the ultimate menace to the Christian church. That menace drives the churches to seek clearer, deeper, more convincing insight into the meaning of man as Christ thought of him, as contrasted with the nationalist doctrines of the mass-man. So, also, they are driven to seek the Christian meaning of the community of the sons of God, as contrasted with concep-

tions based on doctrines of race, blood, class, or while recognizing the elements of truth and error in these doctrines. It would go far to turn the tide of the world's life if all the churches, after centuries of separatist life with divided counsels and at cross purposes, should be able to arrive at a common mission and plan their active advance around a burning central conviction on these supreme issues. It would be much to expect that in two weeks these widely separated churches could agree on the answers to these great questions. But a great amount of mutual education was begun, and plans were adopted for the continuation of such united efforts. Out of this the outcome should be that more and more the Christian churches will draw together in a united front, not in attack, nor of defense (there is no need for them in military terms), but of common testimony and common action for the comfort and healing of a world sorely troubled by the profoundest questions that vex humanity.

In thinking of the church it is important that we in America should try to understand how the Christians in other lands think of it, so that in trying to unite with them in our testimony to the world we may agree with one another. When we speak of the church, it is usually the church on Main Street, and sometimes the Baptist, or Methodist, or Presbyterian church, or some national church organization; or perhaps we mean in some vague way the Christian people in general. In Oxford we were constantly confronted by learned folk who thought and talked of the church as the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church, that body of which Christ is the head, which includes the saints of all the centuries as well as Christian believers in all lands in the present day. To them the church is holy, perfect, and it cannot sin or fail. Its program cannot be expressed in systems or institutions, but only in terms of personal life as it seeks to bring the gospel to men and to give them the power to love. Its task is not to be accomplished by worldly, political activity, but by its spiritual power and forces. So in the Oxford Conference we found it necessary always to indicate clearly whether we were speaking of the universal church which Christ has called into life through his word and spirit, or of the many particular churches—denominational, national, free or established—or other forms of the Christian society in which the life of the church finds varying expression.

With such widely differing views, some seeming in stark contradiction with each other, agreement

¹ The third of a series of articles on the interdenominational emphasis for 1937-1938; supplied by the International Council of Religious Education.

Among the members of the Conference was not easy. The holders of one view see in the others the stigma of other-worldliness, while they in turn are distressed at what they fear to be a descent of the slippery slope of humanism. That the Conference could move forward to a large measure of agreement is convincing evidence of the guidance of God's Spirit and of fundamental unity in loyalty to Christ. So the Conference became in itself a great testimony to the deeper unity of the church. The temptation of theological hair-splitting was not permitted to displace the challenge of man's injustice, cruelty and need.

The first outcome of the Conference is the decision to take definite steps toward the organization of a World Council of Churches. A committee of seven was appointed to go to the Conference on Faith and Order that was to meet in Edinburgh in August, with a proposal to unite these two movements. If that proposal was accepted, the next step will be to establish working relations with other world-wide Christian bodies. So it is hoped to develop a permanent instrument to provide for continuous world-wide study of the issues confronting all the churches, common witness, mutual service, and concerted action. This will be a move forward toward the realization of an ecumenical Christianity that would "hold the world together" against the strains of racial antagonisms, national rivalries, class conflict and any other disintegrating forces.

Thus the discussion of "Church and Community" acquired substantial meaning. Everywhere men are seeking a life of fellowship. The root cause of the disintegration of society is that men have tried to organize themselves on a humanistic basis without reference to God's will and power. The essential message of the church is that in God is the secret of true community and that in Jesus Christ is the revealed secret of God. In seeking to create a world-wide fellowship that will be stronger than all the divisions which disrupt the family of mankind the church must bear witness to three urgent problems—the elevation of the nation to divine status, racial discrimination, and the need for the church to reestablish intimate contact with the common life in deed as well as in word.

In dealing with the subject of the "Church and the State," the Conference faced issues that are of critical importance in many countries today. It was recognized that for the Christian there can be no ultimate authority but God. Christians must live within the state and be witnesses there for Christ. Toward the state the church may be called to take differing positions, either of cooperation, criticism, or opposition, in differing historical situations. For the church, the liberty of worship, witness, service and education must be safeguarded. We must follow with sympathetic

interest the fortunes of Christians and non-Christians who are victims of persecution, with the intention of securing for them treatment "compatible with their human personality as children of God."

In the economic sphere, the first duty of the church is to insist that economic activities, like every other department of human life, stand under the judgment of Christ. In Western society the existence of economic classes has set up barriers to human fellowship. These have been indispensable inequalities of opportunity in regard to education, leisure and health. Christians have a double duty, both to bear witness to their faith within the existing economic order and also to test all economic institutions in the light of their understanding of God's will. The church should develop new types of ministry to give its members the help they need in making responsible Christian decisions.

The longest report adopted by the Conference deals with education. Church, community and state all claim the right to educate the same persons. The church must be eager to obtain for every citizen the fullest possible opportunity for the development of the gifts God has bestowed on him. Education may not submit to the bias of propaganda, but must preserve the pure and disinterested pursuit of truth. The church must keep abreast of all educational improvements, but must realize that no technique will suffice for the building up of the whole man into Christ. Without the Christian gospel there can be no attainment of mental and spiritual health, and its spirit must be mediated through persons to persons. The church must unite and gird itself for the struggle to maintain its freedom to give a Christian education to its own children.

In the world of nations, the church must call men to order their lives as members of the one family of God. War can occur only as a fruit and manifestation of sin. War is condemned as a diabolical outrage against human personality and a defiance of the righteousness of God. At the same time, the Conference with painful frankness found that Christians were not yet agreed as to the course of action to be followed in ridding the world of war. Three different positions are taken by conscientious Christians, but no one of these can be claimed to be completely Christian. We cannot acquiesce in the continuance of these differences, and every possible effort must be made to understand the purpose of God for the church in solving this problem. No international order is equivalent to the kingdom of God, but the church has a practical responsibility to influence the nations in striving to establish such relationships as will do justice and obtain equality of opportunity for all men.

These brief references to the reports adopted at

(Concluded on page 361)

Jesus Defines Neighbor-Love

By JOSEPH MARTIN DAWSON, Waco, Texas

(The following is an excerpt from Doctor Dawson's *Christ and Social Change*, one of the Society's recent publications.)

A religion that holds itself aloof from needy humanity and is occupied with beautiful ritual is a sham. A religion that mumbles its correct creed but neglects the service-deed is a fraud. A religion that dreams of a home in heaven but is not concerned about making safe and wholesome homes on earth misses the mark as tragically as the worst sin; it is the religion of a pose, hypocrisy.

In Jesus' story, the Samaritan, to whom has been given the title of Good, is the practiser of love. He presents the true social attitude. Because he is held up by the Lord Jesus Christ as the portrait of perfect love, we must mark his character well. Accordingly we ask, What manner of love is the perfect neighbor-love?

The man's love was practical. He ministered fully to the stricken wayfarer. To this quality of love Jesus gave such repeated and insistent emphasis that those who are at all acquainted with his teachings will receive it as of first importance. The point I would emphasize here is that the attitude can be crystalized into a social attitude. My friend Charles Forbes Taylor, the evangelist, tells of a corner in Brooklyn that is known as Blindie's Corner, for a very well-known reason:

"On it stands on old blind man selling newspapers. You cannot buy a newspaper from any newsboy on that corner. A gentleman, not seeing the old man, one day called to a boy running with a sheaf of papers under his arm, 'Here, boy, a paper!' The boy never stopped. The gentleman was rather astonished, because these boys are usually very much on the job. He waited until he saw another boy, but the second boy did exactly as the first had done. The gentleman stopped a third boy and said: 'I have tried and failed to buy a newspaper from two different boys. Now, what's the idea? Don't you want to sell your papers?' The boy answered, 'No, sir. Not on this corner, because this is Blindie's corner, and the newsboys would mob me if I was to sell you a paper on the corner that belongs to him.'"

This suggests the interpretation that James gave to Christianity when he explained what pure religion is. "James," says one among us greatly revered in memory, "has no sympathy with that cold orthodoxy that is satisfied with singing psalms to Jehovah while the widow and orphan suffer, with no help from blind worshipers near-by. Christianity is inward and spiritual, but it is not mere perfunctory ritual. It is

not mere mystical brooding, nor is it abstract contemplation. The cry of the child was heard by Jesus and the cry of the mother of the child. Today the children cry aloud in our streets and in our factories for school and play, for love and sympathy, for better homes and better food, for care of the body and the soul. The modern world at last has begun to find the child that Jesus has placed in the midst of it. And there are many other forms of social service which the true Christian may find right at his door. The neighbor in need may even lie at his gate."¹

Again, the true and perfect neighbor-love is not partisan. The Good Samaritan belonged, in the opinion of Jesus' listeners, to a race and religious sect inferior to the affiliations of the wounded Jew on the Jericho road. But his compassion bridged all the differences of class, race and sect. It is the bridging of these chasms of class hatred, race prejudice and sectarian malice for which divided society calls aloud and only the attitude of love on the part of masses of men can ever answer the call.

How contemptible is class hatred; how terrible is race hatred—which has instigated more wars than all other causes; and how cruel is religious hatred; but can we say that one is more cruel than the other? Edwin Markham writes of a class disregarding human rights:

"Two things," said Kant, "fill me with breathless awe
The starry heavens and the moral law."
But I know a thing more awful and obscure,
The long, long patience of the plundered poor.

And what shall we say of the injustice of race toward race? When a Chinese girl attended a Georgia school the other girls treated her with slight consideration. Yet that girl became the wife of Sun Yat Sen, the first president of China, and helped to remake the large nation in the world. Religious animosity? The cruellest thing in all the world is religion without love in it. It is more cruel than earthquake, hurricane, pestilence, famine, or war.

Still again, the perfect love toward one's neighbor as mirrored in this revealing parable, is a love that is prompt and persistent, and, above all, personal. The Good Samaritan did not wait until he could get to the Community Chest or the United Charities, but there and there rendered "first aid." Moreover, he did not think his duty done when he had applied the first-aid remedies, carried the patient to the inn, and paid for the hospital service, but he followed up the case by agreeing to see the man through, even if he had to honor a sight-draft for overtime stay. And more

¹ A. T. Robertson, in *Practical and Social Aspects of Christianity*

assuredly he did not withhold his personal service by turning the case over to an organization. As a matter of fact, he did use the hotel organization and he did employ the existing system of business to care for the stranger; but, in addition and beforehand, he gave himself personally to the service of the wounded. Now, in the ministry to man we must have social organization, but the social attitude, the social mind as exhibited in the Good Samaritan, is even more necessary.

Let it be said with great intensity that social organization is but the multiplication of personal service. The building of the Beloved Community, in its proper organization and proper observance of social relationships awaits the presence of socially minded persons. The personal touch, while not omnipotent, is far more potent than we think. And without it men and women would languish and die in a system which cannot even at its best fully express the love for which the starved heart of humanity hungers. Here is what I mean:

My wife teaches a Sunday school class of several hundred college girls. The effort is made to cooperate extensively with many different types of social-service agencies, such as the home for the aged, the home for underprivileged children, the good-will centers, and the orphan homes. At Christmastime the teacher asked the six hundred children in the Buckner Orphans' Home at Dallas to write a personal letter to Santa Claus, telling what they wished in the way of presents, with a view to having the girls of the class supply them. The letters came and I was permitted to read them—six hundred of them. They were typical children's letters. Little girls wanted dolls, little boys roller-skates and balls. One boy wanted a Scotch-collie pup! The girl to whom the letter came induced her banker father in another state to ship at once a Scotch-collie pup to that youngster at the orphans' home. One of the girls in particular received a letter that bewildered her. The little orphan boy wrote, "I want a sister." A sister? How could she supply that gift? Then, in a flash, came insight to the answer. She said, "I'll be his sister!" She journeyed to the orphans' home and found the lone-home boy. Not only were both his parents dead, but he had neither brother nor sister. "I've seen your letter to Santa Claus," the lovely girl said to the little fellow. "You said you wanted a sister, and I'm here to be your sister." He gave a long look into her beautiful, starry eyes and then flung both arms about her neck and snuggled against her heart. "Oh, sister," he said, "I've been waiting for you so long!"

Personal love will not entirely meet the need of the world, but personal love is indispensable, and it is the attitude of mind which must give support to all that men of good-will and a sense of justice may do in company for the welfare of the masses.

Cooperation Must Continue

By C. L. Newcomb

Director, Seal Sale, National Tuberculosis Association

Thirty years ago nearly two hundred people out of every one hundred thousand of our population were dying from tuberculosis. During these years three and one-half million men, women, and children have died from this preventable disease; but had the mortality rate prevailed an additional two and one-half million would have died. Today the tuberculosis mortality rate is fifty-five per one hundred thousand in this country, and there are more than five hundred thousand people sick with tuberculosis. The chief concern of the thousands of men and women working with the national, state and local tuberculosis associations is to find tuberculosis in its early stage, when cure may be more easily effected. The greatest number of deaths occur between the ages 15 and 45, for which age-group tuberculosis is still the leading cause of death. In spite of the steady improvement of diagnostic methods only 13 percent of cases admitted to sanatoria are found to be in the early stages of the disease. This means there are far too many unrecognized cases in the community infecting their families and neighbors. Only by finding every single case can the disease be stamped out. Early examination, skilful



Christmas Seals

are here again!

**They protect your home
from Tuberculosis**

diagnosis and prompt treatment are the factors that make the disease curable and preventable. Suspicious cases should be promptly examined, and examinations even where the disease is not suspected are important. All this means that the cooperation given the campaign during these thirty years must be continued. The public has done its share generously in the past and now has another opportunity to continue its interest and help. Tuberculosis is everybody's problem, for tuberculosis undiscovered endangers you. Let's help to bring it under complete control by buying Christmas Seals, symbols of the world-wide fight against man's oldest disease enemy.

Whence Came the Christmas Carols?

By VESTA P. CRAWFORD, Salt Lake City, Utah

It is Christmas eve in a small American town. You stand at the window and look out upon the quiet night. Faint at first, and far away, voices echo along your street: "When Christ was born in Bethlehem, 'twas night but seemed the noon of day." The voices come nearer. They fall clear as a bell upon the frosty air. Christmas carols! It is Christmas eve in the city and the tall apartment-houses blink with a thousand eyes; yet along the narrow street a group of singers lift the old refrain, "As shepherds watched their flocks by night." More Christmas carols. They echo through our land and they are sung across the sea. This night the barriers of race and creed are forgotten. The nations listen to the music of Christmas.

Whence came these carols? Some of them are known in almost every country of the world, others are limited to a small domain. Sometimes a carol is sung by a lone watcher upon the wintry hills; sometimes by a group of young people in the street; sometimes they reverberate within the high walls of a lighted church. Everywhere there is joy and benediction—"Light to the world!" In Holland very early on Christmas morning the young men gather in the central part of town and sing the ancient carols. One of them carries a star set upon a pole and lighted from within by a candle. This will be their only light, except the real stars, but it is light enough, and the songs of rejoicing greet the Christmas dawn.

Whence came the carols? From the angel song of old; from those glorious words sung above Judean hills, the words recorded so beautifully in St. Luke. Shepherds "abiding in the field" saw glory shine around them and the angel said, "'I bring you good tidings of great joy.' Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'" The first Christmas carol! Thus, in honor of that ancient carol that echoed long ago on the dark hills around Bethlehem, songs of praise are sung every Christmas in every Christian land, and their tones of gladness still turn our hearts to the eternal message of the angels.

Whether we sing of the holy night, the Wise-men from the East, or the little town of Bethlehem, all of the carols are narrative—they tell a story. And though thousands of carols have been made and sung through the ages, they all have a similar message. In France they are known as "*Noëls*." The word "carol" is said to be of ancient Celtic origin, meaning cadence, harmony, melody, and so has come into our language from the early inhabitants of the British Isles. As

early as 129 A. D. it is written that a certain bishop ordained that "in the holy night of the nativity of our Lord and Saviour, they do celebrate public church services and in them solemnly sing the Angel's Hymn because on that night he was declared unto the shepherds by an angel as the truth itself doth witness. And we know that this refrain, "Glory to God in the Highest," is threaded like a golden link in the carols of the centuries.

Though carols were sung thus early in some of the churches, it was not until the thirteenth century that they were used extensively by the common people. About that time, in southern Europe, a beautiful custom originated. A replica of an infant's cradle was placed in the church, and around this "wee bed" the children stood and sang nativity hymns. This simple dramatization impressed the reality of Christmas upon the minds of all people, and a greater interest in Christmas spread throughout Europe. Soon the manger scene was enlarged to include other Christmas events—the journey of the Magi, the coming of the shepherds—and more carols were added to the pageantry. Sometimes the singers left the church after the performance and sang in the streets, thus giving rise to our present custom of community carols.

Many nations, before their conversion to Christianity, celebrated holidays honoring the advent of the new year at almost the same time that Christmas was remembered by the church. In this way much of the festivity of such occasions became associated with the more sacred character of the early hymns. Thus some of our Christmas carols are both reverent and festive for example:

God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Savior
Was born on Christmas Day!

Of all our Christmas hymns, "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" is the favorite. It was written by Charles Wesley (1707-1788). The son of a clergyman, he early became interested in church work. His brother John was also a faithful servant of religion. As the result of a marvelous spiritual awakening, the two brothers traveled for many years throughout England spreading their gospel message. Charles composed many hymns as he rode along the quiet country roads on his little pony. An inspiration would come to his mind, and at the first resting-place he would call for pen and paper and write. He was the world's greatest writer of hymns, for he composed thousands

and saw a large percentage of them published before he died. None has reached more universal popularity than

Hark! The herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.

On Christmas eve in the year 1818 a young priest, Joseph Mohr, attended a celebration in the schoolhouse at Oberhof, Germany. With him sat his dear friend Franz Gruber, the village schoolmaster, who was an organist and writer of songs. The young men, feeling the spirit of Christmas, believed that it lacked expression in any great song. Over and over Joseph pondered the thought that there was no great Christmas song for his people to sing. That night in his study Joseph glanced at the picture of the shepherds abiding in the fields. That was enough; the inspiration had come. The next morning Joseph handed his friend Franz a copy of the hymn that was to be sung round the world, "*Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!*"

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace!

The Bethlehem manger scene has never been more beautifully and realistically pictured than in Martin Luther's "Away in a Manger." It is characterized by the great reformer's tenderness, when it came to the matter of children, as well as by his fondness for the Christmas celebration.

Away in a manger,
No crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus
Laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky
Looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus,
Asleep on the hay.

Another universal favorite among Christmas hymns is the inspirational "Come, All Ye Faithful!" Its origin is lost in antiquity. No one seems to know who wrote the words or the time of their composing. It was chanted in Latin in the ancient churches. The years have only added luster to this "Hymn of the Ages."

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels!

And so whether a Christmas carol be sung by one alone on a winter's night, or whether it be lifted to the stars by a choir of young voices on a dark street, or whether it be echoed from a lighted church, it travels that long way to the time when shepherds stood on Judean hills and heard the angels sing.

The World Conference at Oxford

(Concluded from page 357)

Oxford do no more than suggest the subjects that were considered. The reports themselves should be obtained and carefully studied. They are not the work of a few individuals, but represent the result of real teamwork by groups of able men, earnest Christians, from many countries. They express some united convictions, and they are evidence of the universal church. The great issues have been defined, the next steps have been indicated, and plans have been proposed for united action. The world is anxious and bewildered, full of pain and fear. We are troubled, yet we do not despair. Our hope is anchored in the living God. The church can be of good cheer, because Christ has overcome the world. In his name we set our hands to the task as the servants of God and of one another—to proclaiming God's message of redemption and combating injustice, cruelty, and hate.

THE church must rid Christian giving of all implications of duty and debt and think of it solely as a privilege and joy. Mrs. Montgomery translates, "God loves a hilarious giver." The ancient Hebrews blew their trumpets in gladness when offering at the altar.

WHEN CHRISTMAS COMES

By W. Everett Henry, McMinnville, Oregon

The year may treat us badly,
The days may linger sadly;
Our friends may often grieve us,
Good fortune seem to leave us,
But the skies are always brighter
And the step a little lighter
When Christmas comes.

There's something in the season
Beyond all human reason,
That brightens hearts and faces
And hides the horrid traces
Of the troubles that we borrow,
Of our loneliness and sorrow
When Christmas comes.

Then let the pulse beat faster,
Good cheer our sorrow master;
Let love again the story
Of Bethlehem's great glory
In a thousand ways repeating
Give to all the world glad greeting
When Christmas comes.

Catching the Angel Vision

By BASIL MILLER, Pasadena, California

WE ARE SCULPTORS OF LIFE

It may not be a chisel, teachers, that our hands hold, nor may it be a block of marble that stands before us. We may carve no "David," as Michelangelo did, for the countless generations to admire. Nevertheless, the real sculptors of life are found among us. Into the sphere of our influence God has sent those pupils whom we are to shape into characters of beauty. They are ours to mold according to the divine pattern. Great teachers fashion great personalities. The contagion of character is so strong that it gently falls upon our classes and models those living personalities.

The blocks of marble which Providence gives us may be of all shapes and forms. As was the case with the famed sculptor noted above, some of this material which we are to carve might seem to be so filled with flaws that a master artist would cast it off. But we also can take that which others reject and sculpture it. It is told that one day the youthful artist passed by the studio of a renowned teacher, and in the alley he noted a large block of marble. Looking at it, he thought of the divine possibilities that might be uncovered. Asking the older sculptor for the block, Michelangelo took it to his own small studio.

Years must roll before the story is complete. When seven of them had gone into history the masterpiece was ready for unveiling. Out of that cast-off block came the greatest statue of all the centuries—his matchless "David."

The poet well expresses the sentiment:

"Chisel in hand stood a sculptor-boy
With his marble block before him,
And his eyes lit up with a smile of joy
As an angel dream passed o'er him."

Chisel in hand—the teacher with the tools of the art!
The marble block—a life ready to be carved, divine potentialities to be wrought out!

CATCHING THE ANGEL VISION

We carve out of those pupils' lives the statuary which first is placed on the canvas of our own souls. It is the angel dream, passing over us, which makes it possible to take the chisel of our profession and carve out of the block of stone a character that will shed the fragrance of a life blessedly lived. We shape character only in terms of the vision before us. Live low, fellow workers in the Sunday school, and you will fashion only lowly character.

Dwell on heights of purity. Make the nest of your abode above life's sordidness. Above the storms which engage the strength of others learn how to soar in the cloudless blue. Be vitally religious. Drink deep from the head of this character stream—the Holy Word of God. Build an angel vision by looking beyond the world. Live in an atmosphere of holy discontent with anything but that which savors of righteousness, of piety transformed into action.

Saturate your own soul with the beauty of great characters, God's heroes of the by-gone ages, and it will be easy for you to transfer these qualities to the human "block of marble."

But higher yet lift your vision, and catch the gleam from that character above all—the Man of Galilee, the Master of the ages. See him as he treads the dusty roads of Palestine and as he still walks in the world of eternal verities. He is our angel vision!

CARVE THAT ANGEL VISION ON THE YIELDING STONE

Plastic minds are facing you each Sunday in the school where character is formed. As the green leaves of summer burst into the glorious hues of autumn, so these little lives are before you to be modeled. Now is the carving time, before the evil days have blackened and marked the stone. Take out of your own character, teachers, the life of Jesus, his contagious personality, the beauty of his moral stainlessness, and with your tools of teaching transfer it to these "yielding stones."

You are to carve that vision. Dull lads they were Walter and Adam, their teachers called them. But patiently with sharp incisions the teacher labored to carve their angel visions. Here a tap, there a gentle rubbing with the polishing-cloth, and again tender handling. Lo, out of this carving work two of the world's great characters, Sir Walter Scott, to entertain us with his stories, and Adam Clarke, to enlighten us concerning God's word.

Passing through the corridors of the museum of the centuries, we pause before the notable works of statuary which we call great personalities, and every one has been carved by someone who first caught the angel vision and then carved it on the marble. Your work of this noble art of fashioning character may likewise be thus placed on review.

Honest Abe said, "My stepmother did it." Booker T. Washington replies, "The sharp incisions which resulted in my life came from my mother." Robert Morrison, missionary evangel, D. L. Moody, the

(Concluded on page 365)

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

By ULYSS STANFORD MITCHELL, M. A., Th. D.

Director of Social and Adult Education¹

Principles of Social Education and Action, Formulated by the 1937 Lake Geneva Conference

That Christian adulthood is awakening to the urgency of its social mission is evidenced by the second annual report, just off the presses. The *Christian imperative* permeates the work of every commission. We have heard the Macedonian call from those who have become entangled in the machinery of a profit-power age.

A famine of the Spirit and of love pervades the land. Materialism is in the ascent. God's people, however, are challenging the pagan influences that suppress and thwart personality development, that cudgel and coerce hungry humans to labor for less than subsistence and under unbearable conditions. The United Christian Adult Movement and the United Christian Youth Movement join in a great United Christian Advance to inject a vital program of social education and action into the program of every evangelical church in America. The following summary of the Conference report on this subject will indicate the challenge of this movement.

SOCIAL EDUCATION AND ACTION DEFINED

Christian Social Action is intelligently planned individual or group activity undertaken with a view to supporting, modifying, or basically changing the contemporary social order in such ways as will make our social institutions just and cooperative for the redemptive purposes of Christianity. The educative processes should precede and permeate each creative endeavor.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ACTION

1. *Persons are of supreme worth.* In that faith and conviction Jesus taught, and lived and died. Christianity in order to be true to him must maintain and develop the implications of this central emphasis. Peter spoke of Jesus as the Pioneer of Life (Acts 1:15, Moffatt). This insistence upon the worth of persons constitutes a major aspect of his pioneering work. The full import of this basic emphasis must be repeatedly explored in a changing environment. The challenge of Jesus' spirit and faith obligates to discover as fully as we can the application of this primary principle to the changed conditions of our day.

2. *The social implication of evangelism.* When we

seek to discover and understand the things that retard and thwart the richest possible experience of life for individuals it is clearly evident that socially determined environmental conditions play a very important part. This fact places upon Christians an obligation to undertake such constructive and creative social changes as will remove these hindrances, and establish the most favorable social matrix possible for the release and cultivation of the latent God-implemented possibilities of individual life experience. All this makes responsibility for Christian social change an imperative aspect of Christian evangelism.

3. *Christian social education and action are expressions of the central purpose of Jesus.* To engage in social action on a Christian level is a responsibility that can be met only as we bring to it the most careful analysis, evaluation and planning. It becomes therefore a primary aim of Christian education to give guidance in this field. Without participation in specific human situations we cannot understand adequately the human factors, nor fully analyze, evaluate and plan. Since Christian education and social action are complementary expressions of the central Christian purpose for the redemption of persons, they cannot be separated by anyone who wishes to share in the Christian task. Both forms of activity are fused in the life pattern of any individual or group committed to the religion of Jesus. They are the primary means available to the person or group seeking to cooperate with God in his compassionate desire and labor to make possible the richest experience of life of which an individual is capable.

4. *Personal Christian living is basic to a Christian society.* Individual Christians must develop in their own lives the values they seek for society. The practice of good-will, cooperation and unselfishness is imperative in personal relationships as well as in the social order. Churches and individual Christians that preach economic justice and racial brotherhood must examine their own practices in the payment of salaries and wages and in their treatment of persons of other races and colors. The passion for bringing the Christian religions to persons in distant lands must be matched by an equal concern for those at home. Preaching world peace loses much of its power if the church fails to recognize its own involvement in the war system.

5. *Respect for the view-point of others is essential to harmony and progress.* In situations involving

¹ Correspondence regarding these departments may be addressed to the Director, 1701-1703 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

social action the spirit of brotherhood should be safeguarded. Democratic processes require that the whole group should not be committed to a program of action when only a small number understand the facts, plans, and possible consequences; or where the majority is opposed to the action contemplated. The fullest opportunity, however, should be provided for adventurous pioneering of individuals and minorities. The spirit of tolerance, mutual appreciation, understanding and good-will should make it possible for persons of the widest variation of opinion and conviction to maintain fellowship.

6. *Intelligent action is based upon intensive study.* Social action should be based upon careful survey and evaluation of facts. Critical evaluation not only of immediate facts but also of the underlying social conditions is necessary to an understanding of the total situation. While action should not wait upon final judgments, any action undertaken should be constantly reviewed in the light of new facts. Care should be taken to avoid judgments based upon prejudice, partisan presentation, or wilful misrepresentation of facts.

7. *Church-community cooperation is desirable.* The church should recognize that many of the areas requiring change are being dealt with by other agencies, which are not always entirely motivated by the end purpose of the religion of Jesus. Christians should not, because of this fact, avoid these agencies, but appraise them in the light of the Christian purpose and relate themselves to them accordingly.

8. *The redemption of the individual requires a changed environment,* and necessarily involves the Christian in social action. Social action thus becomes a primary method for sharing in the redemptive fellowship of Christ. Christian social change "is both the condition and the fruit of salvation." Moreover, as Jesus stressed, this participation with him in seeking the highest good for other persons has consequences for the realization of our own God-given possibilities. He who would save his life loses it, while he who loses it finds it. This result emerges, however, not at the point of conscious effort, but as an unsought outcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL EDUCATION AND ACTION

1. Christian social education and action are essential elements in the program of the United Christian Advance. To engage in social action on a Christian level is no light responsibility. This responsibility can be met only if we bring to it the most careful analysis, evaluation, and planning of which we are capable. It becomes a necessary task of Christian education to give direction to these aims.

2. The United Christian Adult Movement should

lay upon the churches definite responsibility to engage in Christian social education and action. This appeal should not come to them as an emergency measure, to meet certain crises, but as an imperative of the Christian mission.

3. It is recommended, therefore, that the United Christian Adult Movement include in its program definite guidance materials to enable the churches to engage in Christian social action projects for the solution of the problems growing out of felt and unmet needs.

4. Since the basic problem is to create a concern for specific needs in the field of social action on the part of local congregations, methods of social education and a leadership trained in the use of these methods should be developed in the United Christian Adult Movement.

5. The program of action in and through the church should take into consideration movements for social change already established. Because of their implications for the betterment of conditions under which persons must live, Christians can, in many instances give these movements their support. There are also movements outside the church, organized to meet specific situations, with which the congregation or group within that congregation, or individuals, may associate themselves.

6. That the United Christian Adult Movement should provide Christian social action projects in a wide variety of situations for guidance of local groups.

7. The following areas of Christian social action in the United Christian Adult Movement are suggested as follows:

(a) *The area of civil and religious liberty.* It is by extending the realm of freedom rather than by limiting it to the confines of an inadequately interpreted gospel that we increase the probabilities of a peaceful and ethically desirable solution of our problems. We shall either change our social structure to conform to the laws of God or we shall be destroyed by it.

(b) *The area of economic relations.* We should work for the acceptance of the basic social responsibility, for a more equitable distribution of wealth, the right of employers and workers to the democratic control of industry, and the subordination of the present system of private profit to a planned economy in which shall be included a living wage, a reduction in the hours of labor, the protection of workers, the abolition of child labor, social insurance, the welfare of women, and educational, cultural, and technological improvements for rural families.

(c) *The area of the home and family life.* We are convinced that it is God's will for us to establish and maintain Christ as a center of family relationships. To that end we would recommend moral and religious

instruction of the members of the family for the elimination of commercial amusements and the establishment of basic economic and spiritual conditions, so that the integrity of the family may be maintained and the personality of its members developed.

(d) *The area of health.* We are aware that there are many sore spots in society, to be found in the slums of great cities and in poverty-stricken rural areas. Disease, pestilence and malnutrition make it imperative that we apply ourselves to a solution of this problem, looking toward slum-clearance, socialized medicine, sanitation, and the suppression of superstitious practices in the realm of medicine.

(e) *The area of race relations.* We recognize no distinction of race, nationality, or color, and recommend social action in which all forms of prejudice will be eliminated and free expression given to native genius; in which civil liberties will be maintained—such as the abolition of lynching and the suppression of social discrimination.

(f) *The area of Christian citizenship.* The United Christian Adult Movement should educate our citizenry to insure protection against intoxicants and narcotics, for the regulation of movies, the application of justice in our courts and penal institutions, and the establishment of the supreme right of conscience over all institutions, including the state.

(g) *The area of world relations.* We affirm and acknowledge the sovereignty of God over humanity and its relationships, and recommend the recognition of the supremacy of God and human personality in local, national and international spheres, as well as the repudiation of war and all the implications which go with it.

(h) *The area of social and cultural relationships.* It is the concern of the United Christian Adult Movement that the Christian church unite in a common effort to break down class distinctions and the practice of exploitation found in the present civilization of this and other lands.

8. The following policy of social action in the United Christian Adult Movement is suggested:

(a) Agencies cooperating through the United Christian Adult Movement should from time to time make surveys to discover the needs in local, national, and international situations.

(b) Agreement should be reached between denominational, interdenominational and all other organizations cooperating through the United Christian Adult Movement upon major emphases with a view of correlating their programs.

(c) Cooperating agencies should issue in the light of 8 (b) factual material, action guidance, and bibliographies.

(d) The local church should be stimulated to a sense of concern for Christian social action.

"The Birth of Jesus"

(Concluded from page 355)

I know what it needs; it needs—O so much it needs!—a Saviour. Nothing can cure the religious unrest of our times but religion—the Christian religion. Nothing can regulate man's wolfish inhumanity to man but a new human evaluation; and that comes only when Christ comes into man's heart. Nothing can give us better times but a better way of living.

A blind beggar in a city street was begging from a well-dressed gentleman, and when the gentleman told the beggar that he himself had not eaten that day, the beggar gave him a dollar, saying, "I've picked up six dollars this afternoon." Tolstoy, accosted by a beggar asking alms, said, "My brother, I haven't any money." The beggar went on his way rejoicing because Tolstoy had called him "brother."

He whose birthday we celebrate today is the Inspiration Point of history. As astrology led to astronomy, and alchemy to chemistry, and the Renaissance to the Reformation, so the religion of Judea, the culture of Greece and the power of Rome were paths for humanity's feet leading to Christ Jesus. He is not only the greatest "break" in history, but he is a new starting-point in history, glorious with inspiration.

Through long years the world was being prepared for his coming. Many forces had been converging toward a crisis. When God's hour struck on the clock of the sky, the time was fulfilled. The incarnation accentuated the insufficiency of existing forms, quickened the realization of a near-at-hand God, and heightened the hope of an endless life of present and future blessedness.

Catching the Angel Vision

(Concluded from page 362)

world's outstanding soul-winner, and scores of others will tell you that what they were and did they owed to Sunday school sculptors.

KNEE-DEEP IN SCULPTURING!

Summer is passed. School-days are here again. Falling leaves, a coming winter, and time's harvest. The grand review of the ages, teachers, may not be far off. Lift up your eyes—catch a vision of Jesus—carve it in character—and when the "roll is called" your statues will be an honor to you. Yours will be a glad acclaim.

Catch the melody, as the poet chimes it, on a glorious morn:

"He carved the dream on that shapeless stone,
With many a sharp incision,
With heaven's own light the sculpture shone—
He'd caught that angel vision."

Another Kind of Silence

There is another kind of silence to be cultivated besides that of the tongue as regards others. I mean silence as regards oneself—restraining the imagination, not permitting it to dwell overmuch on what we have heard or said, not indulging in the phantasmagoria of picture thoughts, whether of the past or future. Be sure that you have made no small progress in the spiritual life when you can control your imagination, so as to fix it on the duty and occupation

actually existing, to the exclusion of the crowd of thoughts which are perpetually sweeping across the mind. No doubt you cannot prevent those thoughts from arising, but you can prevent yourself from dwelling on them; you can put them aside, you can check the self-complacency of irritation, or earthly longings which feed them, and by the practice of such control of your thoughts you will attain that spirit of inward silence which draws the soul into a closer intercourse with God.—*Jean N. Grou, in "The Maritime Baptist."*

THE ORGANIZED CLASS



Bethany Class,
Cashmere,
Washington

Bethany Class, Cashmere, Washington

This class is just as old as the church is—twenty-nine years. Mrs. W. H. Lawrence has been the teacher from the beginning. In the group picture she is second from left, seated. The president, Mrs. A. D. Allen, is third from the right, seated. A number

of the members were not present when the picture was made. The Cashmere Church is the largest in the Central Association, with the exception of Yakima First. The Sunday school has an enrolment of about four hundred. E. A. Wright is superintendent. The pastor is Rev. S. E. Anderson.



Group of
Young People
at the Morning Service
of the Judson Baptist
Church, Oak Park,
Illinois

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THE SEA MADE MEN. Presented by Roger W. Babson. Fleming H. Revell Company. 280 pages. Illustrated. Price, \$2.50.

We read this book, appropriately, while vacationing at Gloucester. It was compiled from the journal ("log") of one of Mr. Babson's great-uncles who was a Gloucester seafaring man of the old school—from cabin-boy up to master of great sailing-vessels that went all over the world. It wasn't a "soft" life, but it made splendid men of those Cape Ann boys, and in his introduction Mr. Babson suggests that the story accordingly should have a moral for the boys of today. Yet it isn't particularly a boy's book. It was a fine service for the kinsman to thus preserve the old record, and in a real book.

THE YOUNG MOSLEM LOOKS AT LIFE. By Murray T. Titus. Friendship Press. 1937. 181 pages. Price, cloth, \$1.00; paper, 60 cents.

The author, a missionary to the Moslems of North India, pictures young Mohammed Beg, with his grandfather, making the holy pilgrimage from his home in Central Asia, high up on the "Roof of the World," to Mecca, in Arabia. Mohammed Beg learned many things, and so does the reader as he progresses through this most interesting volume. We are surprised to find that Moslems claim to give Jesus greater respect than the Christians do, never mentioning his name without the title *Hazrat* (His Excellency), and following it with a blessing: "On him be peace"; yet Christianity is hated! The book explains this, and many things besides that Christians should know.

LET'S GO! A Sequel to "Whither Christian Youth!" Compiled and edited by Richard Hoiland. The American Baptist Publication Society. 92 pages. Price, 30 cents.

The idea of promoting a series of youth conferences was initiated in the summer and fall of 1935 by Dr. James H. Franklin, then president of the Northern Baptist Convention. A summary of the findings that grew out of these conferences was published and widely circulated under the title "Whither Christian Youth!" When the convention met in St. Louis in May, 1936, it was agreed to continue the plan for at least one more year. *Let's Go!* does not include everything that was said at the twenty conferences held throughout the territory of the Northern Baptist Convention during this second year, nor does it purport to reflect the unanimous thinking of fifteen thousand Baptist young people who were in attendance at these conferences. It is a compilation of a great number of

things which were agreed upon at one or more of the twenty meetings, and its primary purpose is to provide local groups with a great variety of program suggestions from which to select according to their particular needs, interests and capacity. It should prove invaluable to Baptist young people and those working with young people who are eager to keep abreast of the interests and purposes of our Christian youth. Chapter headings are: "Personal Religious Living," "The Church," "Preparation for Marriage and Home Life," "The Liquor Problem," "Building a Christian Economic Order," "World Missions," and "World Peace."

ON GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY. By Rev. Charles Courtenay, M. A. Macmillan. 235 pages. Price, \$2.00.

A book for "the aged who know they are old" and "the aging who only suspect it," with occasional advice for "the young who never think of it," by a man of eighty-seven. Much excellent counsel is offered. The duties of old age, its problems, temptations, relationships to others, prospects and privileges are considered. The necessity of self-discipline to avoid the failings that sometimes accompany old age, and the need of the sustaining comfort and help of religion, are stressed.

MANCHESTER BOYS. By Mitchell Bronk. The Judson Press. 128 pages. Illustrated. Price, \$1.50.

Clean, interesting stories of boy life in a New York State country town in the eighteen eighties, by a member of our Publication Society's editorial staff. While intended for children, many grown people are finding the book enjoyable reading. It would be an ideal Christmas gift for the boy in your home, or Sunday school class.

TEACHING JUNIORS. By Florence E. Norton. The Judson Press. 1937. v and 96 pages. Price, 30 cents.

This manual is particularly adapted to help all kinds of teachers, experienced and inexperienced, enthusiastic and indifferent. It is suggested that it be given a chance to show if it will not "take hold" of the teacher of juniors, and "make a difference" in attitudes and methods. It has been prepared as a text for Course 251a, a First Series Course of the New Standard Leadership Curriculum. It will prove most effective when studied by a group, but will richly reward the individual student to whom the opportunity for class work is denied.

PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. By George Herman Fickes, Ph. D. Fleming H. Revell Company. 1937. 246 pages. Price, \$2.00.

This statement of the principles of moral and religious education has been put in a form which yields

a valuable text-book for use in colleges, seminaries, and training classes of various kinds. The author points out that our progress in scientific discovery and invention is far ahead of our advance in spiritual things, and that the Christian teacher, if he is to perform the largest service, must avail himself of the findings of psychology and general education. Knowledge is emphasized not as an end in itself, but as a necessary means for the direct culture of Christian character.

THE SILVER LINING. By Archer Wallace. Round Table Press. 1937. 94 pages. Price, \$1.00.

A book that radiates courage and good cheer. It consists of fifteen devotional meditations planned to help troubled and perplexed people. In every soul, so this gifted Canadian writer makes clear, there is the strength for turning adversity into advantage. With genuine friendliness he helps the reader to believe that his dark clouds have a silver lining.

PROBLEM-PROJECTS IN ACTING. By Katherine Kester. Samuel French. 1937. 217 pages. Price, \$1.50.

If drama is to render to the church the full service of which it is capable, it must be competently presented. While there has been no lack of books dealing with such matters as play-production, stage-settings and costumes, there has been little or nothing to help the earnest individual who desires to improve his acting ability. This book does just that, and accomplishes it without recourse to monotonous exercises. It gives instead a collection of brief bits of dramatic action, each presenting a different problem, together with a few brief suggestions which will make the rehearsing of them both entertaining and profitable.

THE BOOK OF JOB: AN EPIC VERSION IN ENGLISH. By Edward D. Dimnet. Fleming H. Revell Company. 94 pages. Price, \$1.00.

In the short preface the author declares for the epic rather than the drama character and form of the book. The fact that the mechanics of chapter and verse have been discarded gives one a new sense of the power and passion of the Hebrew wording. Doctor Dimnet's rendering is not only true to the original, but fine English, and in places beautiful:

"For true I know that my Redeemer lives,
And at the last shall come upon the earth;
And when disease has utterly destroyed
My skin, that I in this my flesh shall see
My God—myself shall see him for myself!"

Books like this promote Bible-reading and awaken a fresh interest in great but neglected books of the Old Testament.

HUMOR, OLD AND NEW

It was a day when Dicky had been particularly exasperating. After numerous admonitions his mother finally took him to task properly. She was in the midst of a real scolding when Dicky, smiling disarmingly, interrupted with, "What would you say mummy, if we be friends?"

DICKY's parents had been encouraging him to make his prayers expressions of thanks as well as petitions. One day Dicky with his mother was calling on a kind neighbor who gave him some magazines to cut. "Don't forget to say thank you," prompted his mother.

Said Dicky seriously, "Thank you for the magazines, Miss Moore. Amen."

ONE day Dicky insisted on saying his prayers at naptime. This was his petition: "Dear God, please make mummy let me eat candy *any* time, not just after breakfast. Amen."

SMITH. "Don't you enjoy listening to the honking of a wild goose?"

JONES. "Not when he's driving an automobile."

BUTCHER (to elderly lady). "What can I do for you, madam?"

LADY. "I'd like to try some of that track meat I've heard so much about this spring."

TEACHER. "James, why do we call English our mother tongue?"

JAMES. "Because father does not get much time to use it."

"THAT'S a queer pair of stockings you have on, Pa—one green and the other red."

"Yis; an' oi've got another pair like 'em at home."

"RHEUMATISM," said the doctor, "causes a man to imagine that his joints are very much larger than they actually are."

"I know," explained Mrs. Smith, "our butcher has it."

Lesson Topics for January, 1938

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|---------|-----|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| January | 2. | THE GOSPEL OF MARK: A PREVIEW. | Mark 10: 35-45. |
| January | 9. | PREPARING FOR A LIFE OF SERVICE. | Mark 1: 1-13. |
| January | 16. | BEGINNING A LIFE OF SERVICE. | Mark 1: 14-28. |
| January | 23. | MINISTERING TO PHYSICAL NEEDS. | Mark 1: 29-45. |
| January | 30. | MINISTERING TO SPIRITUAL NEEDS. | Mark 2: 1-12. |

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS (IMPROVED UNIFORM SERIES)

FOURTH QUARTER, 1937: STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

AIM. To create and deepen individual fellowship with Christ and to quicken the conscience of Christians that they may carry the spirit of Christ into all their activities and relationships

These lessons are developed from outlines prepared by the Committee on Improved Uniform Lessons of the International Council. The outlines are copyrighted, 1935, by the International Council of Religious Education and are used by permission

LESSON X. DECEMBER 5. CHRISTIAN REST

Matt. 11: 28-30; Hebrews 4. (Verses printed, Matt. 11: 28-30; Heb. 4: 1-11)

GENERAL THEME: CHRISTIAN REST

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D. D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Revelation 22: 1-5

KEY VERSE: Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.—Matt. 11: 28

Matthew 11: 28-30

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Hebrews 4: 1-11

1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing, therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

At the Threshold of the Lesson

There are happy scenes in the Gospel story, and the simple narratives of the evangelists have cast a peculiar charm over the wanderings and experiences of the Master and his apostolic company. Their Oriental out-of-door life, the lake and the hills heighten this charm. We should not lose sight, however, of the fact that that was in many respects a dark age for Palestine; life was hard and hopeless. Jesus' advent was indeed in the "fulness of time." It was opportune. And he had infinitely much to offer, even if the need—because of wrong ideas of values—didn't always, or very generally, respond.

The Epistle to the Hebrews—the name of whose writer we do not know—likewise comes out of a troubled time; at any rate, the situation was desperate for the little group of the followers of Jesus. A well-organized and severe persecution—probably that of Domitian—was under way. Many Christians were imprisoned; their property was confiscated; they were forbidden to buy and sell; Caesar worship was being enforced, and to refuse to engage in it meant the risk of martyrdom. First Peter, written about the same time, reflects the situation (cf. 1 Peter 4: 12).

Our Epistle was written to comfort and encourage the young church "in such a time as that," and to exhort them to meet the challenge with fortitude and heroism. This writer is, after a fashion, echoing the Master's great word—Come unto Christ all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest.

The Lesson Before Us

I. THE GREAT INVITATION
Matt. 11: 28-30

Only Matthew has these words. We should be everlastingly grateful to him for preserving them, for they are indeed golden words, among the most precious of Holy Writ. They answer the need and longing of almost all hearts

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. Christ's Gift of Rest. Matt. 11: 25-30. But Christ's kind of rest will be a hidden secret to those who, though wise in worldly wisdom, have not humbly learned of him (vs. 25).

Tuesday. The Promised Rest. Heb. 4: 1-11. God labored six days before that seventh. Will there be any seventh for us, unless we too labor—in the creation of the Kingdom on earth?

Wednesday. Rest of Soul. Jer. 6: 16-21. In that prophet's day there must have been tremendous spiritual disquietude, as well as political disturbance. His word is that only in trusting in the Lord can their souls find peace.

Thursday. Needless Anxiety. Matt. 23: 24-34. Cultivate a sense of God's nearness, and his personality. Learn to know him not a vague Influence or far-off Power, but as the Immanuel, "God-

with-us" heavenly Father, who has the power to take care of us—and the love to do it.

Friday. The Rest Cure. Isa. 40: 27-31. Physical rest that doesn't give us vigor and spirit for renewed effort isn't real rest; so true rest for our souls should make us eager for more work for Christ.

Saturday. The Blessedness of the Righteous Dead. Rev. 14: 13. Irksome "labors," accompanied with trouble, is meant; but our "works," joyful activities, we take with us into the blessed life.

Sunday. Life in Heaven. Rev. 22: 1-5. Even such an inspired writing as this must fail adequately to picture the glory of life. Jesus, notice, didn't attempt it. Those four words, "shall see his face" (vs. 4), tell us more than all the rest of the chapter—or even the whole Book of Revelation.

and lives—sometimes. In many senses Jesus says, "Come!" but not infrequently there will be hours when none of his utterances will be so sweet, so satisfying, as this invitation and promise.

They have all the more force because they are spoken by one who was "gentle and humble-minded" (Goodspeed), and who himself knew labor and what it means to be heavy laden. It was a big load that Isaiah prophetically placed on the Messiah (Isaiah 53), but Jesus was fulfilling it all. Yet he can give the invitation and offer with supreme confidence, because he knows that God has imparted to him all of God. The "rest that remaineth to the people of God" is with him.

Labor and heavy laden describe, in the first instance, those who were crushed in spirit because of the oppressive burdens imposed on them by Pharisaic demands; they were the *am-haaretz*, the accursed common people, "who know not the law" (John 7:49). But Jesus' arms were open very wide and his appeal is general and universal; he is inviting to him all who need spiritual relief (salvation); and encouragement and sympathy; all who long for release into a more abundant life; those who are facing "problems," of any and every nature.

My yoke is set over against the yoke of the law, and the senseless minutiae into which the scribes and Pharisees had spun it (Matt. 23:4). Jesus' yoke would be the freeing spirit of his gospel; the faith, hope and patience that it imparts, that make every burden light; and the loving companionship with him that gives us his help and strength.

Rest unto your souls is rendered by Moffatt, "You will find your souls refreshed." From the Greek word employed, "easy" may mean "kind," "benevolent," or even "useful."

II. SABBATH REST. Heb. 4:1-11

Verse 9, "There is a sabbath-Rest, then, reserved still for the People of God" (Moffatt), *contains the key thought of this chapter.* From the beginning God had held out to men the vision and promise of a peace, rest (the two words have a blended meaning here), comparable to the harmony of things that marked that first Sabbath, rest day of his (vs. 4).

Our fathers of the Old Dispensation and we ourselves, the writer is saying, have had the opportunity of this peace and rest. They missed it, through lack of faith (vss. 2, 6 and 3:19) and hardness of heart (vs. 7). He hears God, provoked at such neglect of the blessing, exclaim, in the Psalmist's words, "They shall never enter my rest" (Ps. 95:11). "If they shall," in verses 3 and 5, should read, "They shall not" (cf. 3:11). "Gospel" (vs. 2) is the promise—good news—of rest and peace running all through the older Scriptures.

Coming back to verse 9—in it we have

the conclusion: Though the Israelites failed of it, and Joshua failed to lead the people into it (Deut. 12:9; Joshua 23:1), still God has rest for his people, to be found at "the throne of grace" of his Son Jesus. That the A V needlessly retains the Greek form of the name Joshua in verse 8 has caused much confusion and misunderstanding among unadvised Bible readers.

What is this rest that awaits the people of God, that they may have if they will? We go back to Jesus' words recorded there in Matthew: It is a relief from the labor and the burden-bearing that he had in mind; it is a sweet integration of self, like that he brought to the Gadarene; it is a removal of fear and a casting out of sinful impulses that he accomplished for a multitude of those he chanced across; and it is a peace among men that the angels celebrated at his advent and that he entrusted to his followers when he went away (John 14:27).

The words "Sabbath rest" have had a beautiful spiritual-medicinal meaning that—one fears—they are rapidly losing. The bustle, speed, noise and irreverence of the day that Sunday is coming to be are robbing it of much of its original significance. But so long as we call it by its two names, Sabbath and Lord's Day, we should try to make it minister to body and soul, to home and community and world, the larger peace of God and his Christ.

Rest. Man needs real rest. Growing specialization makes it more imperative than ever that workmen should have at least one day a week of actual rest. And now that the five-day week is being so widely adopted, sports and other strenuous diversions can be arranged for Saturday, leaving Sunday a rest-day.

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ How would you explain the use of the term "Christian Rest"? Is it different? Should it be?
- ¶ Point out the particular value of this lesson and its teaching for our day. What are some of the most serious "labors" and burdens that oppress the men of our time?

- ¶ In what ways did Jesus himself secure relief, surcease from the cares that belonged to his Saviourhood?
- ¶ Explain why the sinful life, or even the irreligious life is incompatible with peace, rest.
- ¶ Are you letting Christ bear as many of your burdens as you might, as he would like to?
- ¶ How may we employ our Sabbath so that this higher kind of rest—distinguished from physical rest—may be cultivated?
- ¶ Explain how the one conduces to the other. What will be the moral effect, then, of a secularized Sabbath?

Notes and Comments

Mark Guy Pease tells how the farmer in Yorkshire who used oxen had a practice of making the yokes heavier on one side than on the other, because the oxen were never equal in strength. Jesus says: The yoke with me is easy and the burden light—and why? Because the heavier side of the yoke and the greater part of the burden rest upon his shoulders. The fulness of this figure comes out when we remember that Christ is also Sin-Bearer for us.

The help that Jesus gives us in our burden bearing is in part attributable to the new atmosphere which he throws around our lives. The soul is invigorated by it. One of Napoleon's foot soldiers wrote: "The accoutrements which each of us had to bear, that had fearful weight down on the stifling Lombard plains, seemed light and easy as we climbed the Alpine passes." Strength is what Christ gives, not immunity.

"Art thou weary, art thou languid,

Art thou sore distressed?

'Come to me,' saith One, 'and coming Be at rest.'"

"Rest is not quitting

This busy career;

Rest is the fitting

Of self to its sphere.

"'Tis loving and serving

The highest and best;

'Tis onward, unswerving,

And this is true rest."

—Goethe.

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman,¹ Columbus, Ohio

CHRISTIAN REST

In a sermon many years ago I heard for the first time the effective figure of speech in which the Christian at rest in

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a busy world was likened to the bird on her nest in the limb of a great tree overhanging a steep waterfall. Danger on every side—safety nevertheless. A noisy clattering environment—serenity and peace notwithstanding. That simile has been used often. It seems to help much in appreciating how those who live in harmony with God and nature's laws can maintain integrity and function successfully in the very midst of exceedingly distracting circumstances.

The word "rest" has a variety of meanings. The sense in which it is used in the first paragraph lends itself easily to homily. Certainly it is good to know how to trust while obeying, to perform duty though difficult and yet be serene and confident. As it is often put, rest thus means a state of mind in activity rather than a state of body in inactivity.

Christians of course reject the Buddhist doctrine of Nirvana—a release from existence as the greatest good, a complete and happy freedom from worldly evils. That is a negative conception. It is very distasteful to the nervous, active, busy, money-making American. As a species of psychological busybodies, we are in sad need of the principle implied in the Key Verse for today. That principle is that the follower of Jesus may expect a spiritual repose sufficient to counteract the labor and burden incident to daily complications: "I will give you rest"; "My grace is sufficient for you"; "Be not anxious for the morrow"; "Consider the lilies of the field"; "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

One of the meanings of our English word "rest" is altogether negative. It means a complete let-down, relaxation, perhaps sleep. The extreme illustration is afforded by the mountaineer who regretted he could not see the unusual sight on the road in front of the cabin because he was tilted back in a chair facing in the opposite direction.

"Rest" also means a state of repose without anxiety. Such a state of mind may have a false base. The political candidate, addressing a group of electors, stood for this and for that, and made the plea for support:

"Now, my friends, will you support me or will you support my opponent?"

"We will," came a chorus of loud replies.

"You will what?" asked the candidate.

"We will not!" they shouted back.

"Thank you, my friends," said the candidate; "I thought you would."

Misplaced confidence has throughout the ages been the cause of individual and social tragedy. How about money as a pretty good foundation for serenity?

"Put not your trust in riches." "Go and sell what thou hast . . . and come and follow me." Let us just ignore God and go right along about our business.

"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." How about fame, honor and the vote of the people?—"Pride goeth before destruction." How about military strength and power as a national build-up?—"Righteousness exalteth a nation."

Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion." How about a hypocrisy founded on cleverness?—"Shall I be pure with ticked balances, and with a bag of deceitful weights?" How about going along with the multitude, doing as the Romans do, relying on safety in numbers?—"Narrow is the way and strait

is the gate . . . and few there be that enter thereat."

The fourth chapter of Hebrews, like the whole book, is hard to understand. I think I am right in saying that our chapter for today teaches: Rest and happiness come through Christ; the unbelief of the Jews was their downfall; it should be a warning to us; God's requirements are severe; we cannot escape God; rest and peace are conditioned by obedience.

Before My Class of Women

Cora F. Sherwood, Salem, Massachusetts

CHRISTIAN REST

"I'm so tired" is such a common plaint that this lesson should have an appeal to many. However, when we seek to discover the real meaning of rest as taught by Jesus in this passage in Matthew we find it is not the rest of idleness, but of ease of working; not cessation of work, but freedom from chafing; not a lighter load, but a loss of the sense of frustration.

Jesus often saw the farmers of his time plowing the fields with animals yoked together. Sometimes these may have been fat, well-kept, well-mated oxen. More likely they were not. In some parts of Europe it is quite common to see an ox and a cow, or a cow and a horse, yoked together to do the draft work of the little farms. Evidently he had often seen ill-fitting yokes under which the working animals chafed and fretted. One day he thought, "That is exactly what is happening to the people around me. They are trying to do their work with something that was meant to help them, but which is really being a hindrance, or a source of irritation." This something was the law of the scribes and Pharisees of his day. It was commonly called a yoke. Intended to help people live according to God's plan, it had become so complicated by man-made interpretations and additions that instead of helping people it was really irritating them. What Jesus really said that day was, "Come to me you who are finding it hard to live and work under the rules and regulations of these religious teachers. I have a way of life that will help you to carry on life's load without chafing and with the feeling that it is not too hard for you."

Matthew Henry says, "The way of duty is the way of rest"; and we think of Augustine's, "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rest in Thee."

1. *What is this yoke or help which Jesus offers?* The way of life offered by the religious teachers of his time made many demands. They tried to regulate all of life to such an extent that people were always afraid that they would break some law without knowing it. Jesus on the other hand made just two demands. These covered a lot of

ground to be sure, but they were small in number. One of these concerned the will. He asked those who wanted to be his followers to make up their minds to do the will of his Father in heaven. The other concerned the emotions of people. Jesus asked those who wanted to be his followers to love others as he loved them. On these two commands he said hung all the teaching of the law and the prophets that really mattered. Jesus declared that this was the kind of religious life that would really help people to bear the problems and burdens which came to them in life. Doubtless he also knew that if they lived this way their loads would actually be lessened. When one takes a right attitude toward God and one's fellow men there certainly is less trouble in living.

2. *Important to have a well-fitting yoke.* Whether we like it or not, we must wear some yoke . . . some philosophy of life. Unless we are cowards enough to give life, we have to keep on going. There are loads to lift, burdens to bear, work to do. "The world is primarily a working world. From the insects to the angels, creation hums with work. . . Discouragement is a natural consequence of idleness. To be idle is to be shut in, and in such confinement one feels powerless and insignificant." These are words from Dr. Richard C. Cabot. Then let us rejoice that we have work to do. Let us be even more grateful that Jesus has shown us how we can work without that work being drudgery.

3. *Soul rest conquers bodily fatigue.* If we have the right spirit inside it is amazing how much more we can do before we get physically overtired. Loads are not so heavy if we can see a good reason and a purpose for carrying them. This lesson is especially important for those of us who have passed the youth of life here. Dr. Mary Wooley, the retired president of Mount Holyoke College, said recently to an interviewer: "I feel it is a great mistake to believe all the interests and enthusiasms of life belong to the young. As you grow older you accumulate a great many things that young people can't have—not only experience, but so many delightful memories and associations. There is a certain deepening. You learn to discount the trivialities and cherish the things that endure. I think it is a grave mistake to feel that life is coming to an end. I don't believe that it does."

There are always those who are heavy laden. Always those who need lighter loads. Out of the turmoil of this modern social unrest we hope some will get certain loads of hard living lifted. But in all classes of people there are those who need Jesus' yoke, his way of life. They need to learn to live without feeling frustrated or defeated. Many of them do not know how to get this satisfactory way of life. Many never will know unless we tell them . . . by word of mouth and manner of life.

The Lesson Illustrated

Susanna G. Fisher

CARRYING HER OWN BURDEN

Come unto me all ye . . . that are heavy laden (Matt. 11:28).

The story is told of a woman who was carrying a heavy basket along a dusty road of a hot summer's day. A countryman overtook her and she gladly accepted his offer of a ride. But she still continued, wearily to hold the basket, in the wagon. The man said, "Don't you see that your basket will be just as well off in the bottom of the wagon, and you yourself far more comfortable?" "Why," she answered, "I never thought of that." The Lord Jesus has taken you up into his chariot, but you are missing much of the joy and peace of your journey with him because you insist upon bearing still so many of your burdens.

REST

We which have believed do enter into rest (Heb. 4:3).

There is a rest that is *given*, a rest that is *found*, and a rest that *remaineth* to the people of God. The first brings

relief to the troubled conscience, the second to the troubled heart, and the third brings to the believer the fulness of joy that is in the presence of the Lord, the pleasures that are at his right hand forevermore. The first is directly connected with the Son as the Saviour of sinners; the second is more immediately related to the Holy Spirit as our abiding Comforter; and the third is associated with the "Father's house," in which "are many mansions."—*Macduff*.

A GREAT MOTTO

Take my yoke upon you (Matt. 11:29).

The motto of Lord Shaftesbury was "Love; serve"; and nobly did he live up to this motto. What he did for the poor of London, for the insane, for pauper children, for chimney-sweeps, for seamstresses and shoeblacks, and for all kinds of philanthropic works would take long to tell. "When I think that I am growing old, and that I have not long to live," he said toward the end of his life to one who was telling him of the wrongs of working girls, "I hope it is not wrong, but I cannot bear to die and leave the world with so much wretchedness in it." Pauper and prince alike

came to do him honor when he died. The laboring man was heard to say in choking voice: "Our earl's gone. God knows he loved us, and we love him. We shan't see his likes again."

FELLOWSHIP

Learn of me (Matt. 11:29).

"It is impossible for us to live in fellowship with God without holi- in all the duties of life. These things act and react on each other. Without diligent and faithful obedience to the calls and claims of others upon us, our religious profession is simply dead. The disobedient conscience when it points to relative duties irritates the whole temper and quenches the first beginnings of devotion. We cannot go from strict breaches, and angry words, to God."

He that taketh his own cares upon himself loads himself with an unequal burden. The fear of what *may* come, expectation of what *will* come, desire of what *will not* come, and the inability to redress all these, must needs bring continual torment. I will cast my care upon God: He hath bidden me.—*Bishop Hall*.

LESSON XI. DECEMBER 12. DAILY FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST AND CHRISTIANS

1 John 1:1-7; Rev. 21:1-7

GENERAL THEME: CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

[This lesson written by W. QUAY ROSSELLE, D. D., Malden, Massachusetts]

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Psalm 139:1-12

KEY VERSE: Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.—1 John 1:3

1 John 1:1-7

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Revelation 21:1-7

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. Christian Fellowship. 1 John 1:1-7. The finest human fellowship possible only among those who are united with God through Christ. We cannot be in right relations with men if we are in wrong relations with God.

Tuesday. God with His People. Revelation 21:1-7. The tabernacle, or dwelling place, of God is with men. Regeneration of humanity is the earthly home of God. Let us learn to look for God there.

Wednesday. Fellowship with Christ. 1 Cor. 1:1-9. Christ admits believers to intimate fellowship with himself, enriching them in "all utterance and knowledge." Our fellowship with him is that of brothers in the Father's household.

Thursday. Fellowship in Service. Cor. 4:1-12. Paul had much affection for those who shared his Christian labor. It is ever so. A great value of church membership is in the fact that there are dear comrades in the service of God. Unless we actually serve we cannot deny this fellowship.

Friday. Sharing What We Have. Cor. 8:1-9. The fellowship of ministering to the saints! The comradeship of generous souls. Grace is ever self-

sharing. If there is no sharing, there is no grace. There is a philanthropy of spiritual wealth.

Saturday. Christian Brotherhood. Acts 2:41-47. There are fellowships of selfishness, but they are not Christian. Christian fellowship is a brotherhood, based on the facts that God is our Father and all of us his children, and therefore brothers.

Sunday. The Ever-Present God. Ps. 39:1-12. There is no escaping God. Millions have tried to run away from him, but failed. We cannot do away with God in our lives by denying his existence, or seeking to ignore him. His inevitable presence is either a terror to us, or a glorious consolation.

At the Threshold of the Lesson

We are naturally gregarious. No man liveth unto himself, and no normal person wishes to do so. One of the saddest souls in the world is the lonely soul. Most of us have had the experience of what is called homesickness. It is a real sickness of the soul which destroys happiness, shatters bodily health, drives people insane, and even leads to death. What is this homesickness but the loss of familiar human fellowships, from which circumstances have parted us? The human spirit reaches out for fellowships with others as growing plants reach out for the sunlight.

But in this lesson our thought should be led out to the special fellowship among men and women who share the new life in Christ Jesus, and who are thus in the fullest and noblest sense brothers and sisters together, as children of the Father in heaven. This is what is meant by the theme, "Christian Fellowship." Christian fellowship sweetens and ennobles all other fellowships, and in it each person receives the cleansing grace of Christ as he never would or could alone. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:7).

The Lesson Before Us

I. THE NATURAL LAW OF FELLOWSHIP

Apparently God has ordained that all created things belong together. It was inspired insight that enabled Job to understand the designs of God when he exclaimed, "The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God (all things of his creation) shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). There is a fellowship of the stars. We have not known the stars until our souls are moved by the sublime stellar chorus.

The minerals of earth are found each with its own kind. Where any coal is discovered, other coal is sure to be. And so with all things. It seems to be a law that things are found together where they are found at all. This is true of the trees, all plants, all animals and all men.

Then these kindred groups belong together in a larger unity. Vegetation feeds animal life, and animal life sustains vegetation. Every created thing has a social significance and relationship. Everything is dependent upon, and contributes to everything else. God's creation is a vast society; a society to which we all belong, and out of which there would be no possibility of self-realization. Any smallest part of your automobile is a social thing. It is useless, except as it is in right relation to all other parts of the car. And so it is with men.

II. THE REDEMPTIVE PURPOSE IN NATURE

Our Christian Scriptures teach us that the marvelous complex of nature is placed at the disposal of us humans for our spiritual good. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Not every one thing may work for our good, but when all things work together the result is our good. The pharmacist compounds a prescription in which one of the ingredients taken alone might cause the death of the patient, but all together they bring health. In like manner the whole creation is God's prescription for our good.

The universe is God's instrument for bringing men to divine sonship. There is no "Riddle of the Universe" to one whose faith sees this truth. The universe is not driven by "blind force"; it is guided by the loving hand of an all-wise Creator. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now, and not only they, but we ourselves also, which have the first fruits . . . waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:22).

III. OUR HUMAN FELLOWSHIPS

We are social beings and belong in a society. The fuller and richer our individual lives the more do we belong to other people, and they to us. There is no better test of character than capacity for constructive social living. The plants growing together fertilize each other. Utterly removed from all relation to others of its kind no plant could thrive and come to its full possibilities. There is spiritual fertilization in human lives, as we live together in a cooperative sharing of divine grace, as it is given in our fellowships. We are admonished not to neglect "the assembling of ourselves together." Indeed, we dare not neglect it, if we are to live at all in any worthy way.

There are common experiences and interests which draw us together in fellowships. Neighborhood is one. People living near each other come to know and usually to esteem each other. Young people fall in love and marry in the neighborhood. The significance and value of neighborhood is very great.

World peace waits for the extension of neighborliness to all the earth. Common tastes, interests, occupations, ideals, and the like, draw men together in social unity. No man can live a satisfactory life alone. Only as we lose our lives in the social fraternity do we really find them.

Here is a place where common arithmetic does not always obtain. In social fraternity one plus one are still one, and yet more than two. A husband and wife are two persons, yet one sacred social organism. "And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh (Mark 10:8). Each of these two increases moral stature by belonging to the other. It is quite literally true that by losing one's life in a social unity, one finds life. Conversely, by withholding our lives from social unities we lose them.

Our human virtues are the names of social relationships. Without the help of others we could not have any nobility. Love, friendship, mercy, generosity, gentleness, graciousness—what are they but commerce between ourselves and other people? Without another person to make it possible, one could never be a brother or a neighbor, or a friend, or a fellow of any sort. "It is not good that the man should be alone." It is not possible to be a man, in any moral and spiritual sense, alone. A man needs a help-meet—another person to make it possible for him to express his manhood. Fellowship is absolutely essential to life.

IV. CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Human fellowships may be based on selfish and exclusive motives. Not alone in India but in all the world the caste idea prevails. Every city has its Brahmins, and its Social Register. We are proud when our names get into *Who's Who*. How much there is of polite snobbery among us! Even some Christian churches are tainted with this spirit, as they seek to recruit their membership from the so-called "best people."

This attitude is violently contrary to the example and the counsels of Jesus Christ. He was fiercely opposed because he was friendly with outcasts. "And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said, 'How is it that he eateth with publicans and sinners?'" (Mark 2:16.) The reply of Jesus is full of rebuke: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matt. 5:46.) Our Lord put greatness upon a new basis: "Who-soever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. 20:27). Not the masters, but the servants are God's élite. Their names may not be in the Social Register, but they are in the Book of Life.

Christian human fellowship is the outcome of fellowship with God. This is

the declaration of our Key Verse for today. We must be truly the sons of God before we can be the brothers of Christ. When we are the brothers of Christ we shall be brothers of all men. No racial, national, or social distinction can bar us from the fellowship of love and service with all of God's humanity. Inasmuch as we have done it unto the least of these we have done it unto him (Matt. 25:40). Fellowship with God puts us into loving relation to all men, and right relation to all men puts us into loving fellowship with God. It is a wonderful privilege to have the fellowship of a noble human friend, but what a holy and august privilege it is to have actual fellowship with God.

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ What must be added to any wholesome human fellowship in order to make it Christian?
- ¶ Is it the purpose of God that all racial, national and cultural distinctions among men shall be dissolved in the Christian fellowship?
- ¶ Do you think that foreign-language Baptist churches in America should be maintained?
- ¶ Does Christian fellowship depend upon complete creedal agreement among its members?
- ¶ Is the fact that the church of Christ is broken into many sects and denominations a violation of the spirit of Christian fellowship?
- ¶ What would you say about the power of Christian fellowship when in time of war Christians in the contending nations go forth in hate to slaughter one another?

¶ Yet there were many instances where in the World War Christian brotherliness did assert itself between the contending combatants. Can you mention some?

Notes and Comments

"Love comes first. It is only if we love other people, are interested in them, believe in them, enjoy them, that we can or have any right to help them."—*Canon Raven.*

"I like that word 'we.' It smacks of fellowship, brotherliness, cooperation, and these are all terms very much to my liking. The perpendicular pronoun has its place, but it is greatly overworked. Isolation does not get us anywhere, and the world is rapidly finding it out."—*Doctor Abernethy, in "Left-Handed Folks."*

I wish all names among the saints of God were swallowed up in that one of "Christian." I long for professors to leave off placing religion in saying: "I am a churchman"; "I am a dissister." My language to such is: "Are you of Christ? If so, I love you with all my heart."—*Whitefield.*

Uniformity is not possible. Men differ much in the powers of their mind, in their education, and in the circumstances in which they live; and therefore you cannot make them think and feel alike; and the attempt to do so is as unwise as if you tried to cause all the trees of the earth to produce leaves of the same size, blossoms of the same hue, and fruit of the same flavor. . . It is not uniformity that we see in the works of God, but unity in variety and permanence in change. Every plan, flower, and tree has freedom to unfold itself according to its own nature; and yet the landscape is one.—*Thomas Jones.*

race and culture. We are cosmopolites. Our habits and laws have been noticeably affected by the infiltration of European blood. But what can we claim for our "new principles, new ideas and new opinions?" Are we near to the realization of a Christian fellowship?

Today (August 12, 1937), I dictated a letter to a young man, an aspirant for membership in my courses at the university where I teach. He is of a fair adherents to which find considerable difficulty in securing positions in avowed non-sectarian organizations. I said to him, in reply to his direct question about prospects for employment if and when his course were completed: "I am considerably embarrassed, and my sense of justice is outraged, to have to say to you that the chances for your employment are poor. I have twenty-two men about to receive their degree (M. A. in social administration). Sixteen of them are already assured of positions as of September 7. Six of them are of your faith. Not one of them has been accepted, though I have recommended them, and despite the fact that they are able."

I have had a very few colored men in my graduate classes. I have never been able to place one of them in a position. Doctor Jones of the Stokes Foundation chatted with a group of ten university professors yesterday. I was one of the ten. Strongly and idealistically humanitarian, he nevertheless said, in reply to direct question: "I believe, under existing circumstances, it is necessary for social welfare that separation of the races be maintained in the South."

Christian fellowship is an ideal that American Christians do not take seriously. We are satisfied with the cosmic summation of an inward urge to love "one with the Father." As for us Baptists, we glow in the thought and practice of individualism. I myself believe that to be sound and good. Christianity starts in the heart of man. The social implications of the life of Jesus are penetrating. Fellowship, by the very nature of the word, is an experience of neighborliness, in social contacts, in the conquest of prejudices, in the development of faith in one another, in the practice of love.

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

We used to hear much about America as "the melting-pot of the nations"—to bring forth a new race of men. Quoted in *The American Legion Magazine* for July are these words, written while our Revolutionary war was in progress by Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crevecoeur, native of France, to be found in his *Letters from an American Farmer*, published in London in 1782:

"He is an American who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. . . Here individuals of all nations are melted in a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day

cause great changes in the world. . . The American is a new man who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas and form new opinions."

The quotation is embodied in an editorial in the magazine vigorously in support of the Constitution of the United States. Says the editor, "The Constitution stands, a bulwark against autocracy of either group or individual, still 'the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man,' as Gladstone described it two generations ago."

Surely no one of us would gainsay the strength and validity of the words of the patriotic Legion. God be thanked for the power and influence of the Constitution of our country. God be thanked for the defenders of liberty against autocracy of either group or individual. But where is the new race of men? To be sure we have mixed

Before My Class of Women

Cora F. Sherwood, Salem, Massachusetts

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

One of the much-talked-of books of the past year was *Live Alone and Let Life Live Itself*. I have not read this book but have heard it discussed and have read comments on it. From them I judge Miss Hillis tried hard to build up the idea that fellowship with oneself, if such a thing is possible, was a very satisfying experience. The joys of living alone outnumber those of an intimate family fellowship, so this book claims.

However good a defense this idea may

for certain people who find themselves compelled to live thus, the truth is not borne out in the experience of real people. Recently a college woman friend said to me: "You have someone to talk to and share experiences with. We unmarried women miss the fellowship of the family life. I did not mind it at first but as I grow older I realize more keenly what I have missed." Just yesterday a mature woman who has just laid away the remains of her mother said to me: "Of course I would not wish either my father or mother back. They suffered so much. But for myself I feel so much alone with them gone. I miss the fellowship with those I loved."

Twice in the seven verses from John we have the twin ideas of fellowship with other Christians and fellowship with God. Just what does John mean? Probably his full meaning is well-nigh impossible to understand but even a casual reading makes it plain that these two ideas are not only twins but Siamese twins—that is they not only belong together but they are inseparable.

In a series of lectures on the Christian church given at Northfield, Mass., to the Women's Missionary Conference, in the summer of 1936, Dr. John Mackay, of Princeton Theological Seminary, laid much emphasis on this idea of fellowship. May I share some of my notes with you. Notice how his thought runs along the dual line of fellowship which John suggests. Doctor Mackay declared that God's purpose in history is a world fellowship in Jesus Christ. It is the thing he is most interested in. God wills the family. God wills that people live together in groups, not alone by themselves. Therefore a Christian must have fellowship or he is hopelessly out of God's purpose in history. True, people and nations may live outside of God's purpose in fellowship but they are not part of God's history and will not endure. We find the idea of world fellowship in the Old Testament, in the blessing coming through Abraham. The reality came at Pentecost when the little group of disciples was fused as never before. Others became members. People came to be at peace with God. They felt God and each other in a new sense.

The experience of fellowship came before an organization. In later years the church did not keep true to this idea of fellowship and reached out for power. This has been notably true of Catholic evangelizing movements. The last hundred years of Protestant Christian missions has come the nearest to the fellowship of the first century Christianity.

In our time we see a world more closely united than ever in a physical sense. Through important inventions we have so cut down space and time that we are near together in a physical sense. Yet strangely enough our world is more divided in a spiritual sense. Bottomless fissures of hate have swept along the frontiers of continents. Man

is afraid of man. The nearer we get together the more afraid we are of each other instead of becoming friends. This is the challenge to our Christian faith, our church. We may well ask, Is this our Father's world? Doctor Mackay believes the conflict is on in the world now in a tremendously big way between these two ideas of the will to power and the will to fellowship. What form it will take in America is not yet plain but it will come. Man must be changed, made over. That is the task of the church: to bring men to God, bring men into a world fellowship in Jesus Christ. But the church cannot do this important work unless it is a fellowship itself. At the present time Christian congregations are not fellowshipping. Men have more in common with fraternities and women with clubs. This cannot continue and the church live. A real church is a big soul-fellowship of commonplace people made great by their uncommon fellowship. The only hope of the world is this Christian world fellowship. Is it a dream? Yes, but God's dream. It shall be fulfilled in a city of God for which we should all work. Russia is coming to realize, and Germany will come to it, that not even Russia and Germany can make man after their own image. They are willing power. God wills fellowship.

The Lesson Illustrated

Susanna G. Fisher

THE ETERNAL LIFE

We have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us (1 John 1:2).

O Love, O Life! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one,
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noonday sun.
So to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in thee the fatherhood
And heart of God revealed.

—J. G. Whittier.

THE WATER OF LIFE

I will give unto him that is athirst . . . of the water of life freely (Rev. 21:6).

Billy Sunday once told of a party of people who were taking a train from Pasadena, a city that, as everyone knows, is one of the beauty spots of California. From the car-windows the passengers looked with delight upon trees with golden oranges gleaming through the deep green foliage; upon velvety lawns, banks of blooming roses, and flowing fountains. But all that beauty was soon left behind, and the hot sandy desert enveloped them. From the car-windows one saw only a desolate waste. "Isn't this awful!" said someone; but another replied, "Yes, yet this is just the same soil as that of Pasadena, only that is

irrigated land; it has water, and this has not." The Water of Life likewise makes a "difference!"

WORKERS OR IDLERS?

If we walk in the light (1 John 1:7).

If we travel slowly, and loiter on the road, Jesus will go on before us, and sin will overtake us. If we are dilatory and lazy in the vineyard, the Master will not smile on us when he walks through his garden. Be active, and expect Christ to be with thee: be idle, and the thorns and briars will grow so thickly that he will be shut out of thy door.—*Spurgeon.*

HE TRIED, AND WON

He that overcometh shall inherit all things (Rev. 21:7).

How many times that man who lay by the pool of Bethesda must have tried to roll himself down first into the troubled waters! How many, many times he must have sobbed in consciousness of his physical impotence, and yet when Christ stood by him that day and spoke to him bidding him to arise and walk, he forgot all the times he had tried and failed, he forgot that he could not, and by virtue of his blindness, he arose and did. —*R. E. Speer.*

MINISTERING TO THE THIRSTY

I will give unto him that is athirst of the . . . water of life freely (Rev. 21:6).

In a lonely pass of the Blue Ridge Mountains there is a small but beautiful spring whose water is cool and sparkling, and is believed to have healing qualities. It is called "Aunt Polly's Spring," because a half-century ago, according to the current story, an old woman of that name used to sit beside the spring all day long, with a tin cup, which she filled with the refreshing water and handed to each passing traveler. She made no distinction among those to whom she ministered; no matter whether well-dressed or ragged, pleasant or repulsive—if they were thirsty and would accept the water they were welcome. Pay was sometimes offered her, but this was always refused, for the good soul believed and affirmed that as soon as the water was sold, the healing power would go out of it. It must be received "without money and without price," and the only requirement on the part of the recipient was thirst. Is not this a sample and beautiful picture of the spirit which should animate all Christians in relation to those about them whose souls are famishing for the Water of Life?—*Baptist Teacher.*

I CONSIDER the joys of life, but they do not come up to me; I was made for thee. Therefore I weave other songs, I fancy other joys; and all the time I am in search of thee. Thou art my picture, my poem, my song; my dream of beauty is a dream of thee. It is because I have seen thy face that I seek a new heaven and a new earth.—*George Matheson.*

LESSON XII. DECEMBER 19. GOD'S GIFT OF A SAVIOUR

Luke 2: 1-20. (Verses printed, Luke 2: 8-20)

GENERAL THEME: THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D. D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Isaiah 9: 1-7

KEY VERSE: Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.—Luke 2: 11

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. The Birth of Jesus. Luke 2: 8-20. "Let us go even unto Bethlehem!" (vs. 15) — "house of bread." How appropriate many of these Bible names! This little Judean village has supplied Bread of Life to all the world.

Tuesday. The Magnificat. Luke 1: 46-55. We may think of Mary here as representing universal womanhood praising God for all the rich blessings that were to come to womankind, in particular, through the One who was to be born.

Wednesday. Foretold by Prophets. Acts 3: 22-26. Moses was one of the greatest emancipators in all history, but well he knew that a greater would be needed—to turn men away from their iniquities (vs. 26).

Thursday. The Saviour. Matt. 1: 21-25. There are so many and such dire things that man and his world must be saved from that the word "Saviour" stands out big and precious.

Friday. The Son of God. Gal. 4: 1-7. His Son, that we might be his sons. When we can honestly call God by that same intimate Aramaic word that Jesus used, Abba, we must be getting pretty close to the throne of grace.

Saturday. The World's Redeemer. Luke 1: 67-79. We should never lose sight of the etymology of the verb redeem, "to buy back." Mankind was enslaved, then—in the bondage of sin; and a price was demanded and paid—what an awful one!

Sunday. God's Gift to Humanity. Isa. 9: 1-7. It is interesting that even in prophecy Christ's reign is to be an ever-

growing, endlessly-increasing one (vs. 7). He is indeed "the Christ of the Ages."

At the Threshold of the Lesson

The Roman Empire ruled the world; was the world. Caesar Augustus was emperor. He was very proud of his power, and it was one of his favorite occupations to catalog the populations and revenues of his vast domains. So in the "year of Rome" 749 or thereabouts he issued an edict that a census (to serve as a basis for future taxation?) should be taken of all his subjects. One of the countries affected by this decree was Judea, whose king, Herod the Great, was a vassal of Augustus. It set the whole land in motion, for the Jews were registered not where they resided, but where they belonged as members of the original twelve tribes.

Among those whom the edict of Augustus thus sent journeying was a Galilean carpenter of Nazareth, with his espoused wife Mary. It was nearly a hundred miles that they had to go, to Bethlehem, David's home town. When they arrived, anxious and weary, they found the place crowded with strangers, on the same errand as themselves. No friendly door was opened to receive them, and so they had to clear away a lodging-place in a corner of an inn yard, the travelers' asses feeding all around them. There, that very night, Mary brought forth her first-born son; and because there was neither womanly hand to assist her, nor cradle to receive him, she herself wrapped him in whatever cloths were at hand and laid him in one of the feeding-troughs.

The next morning the noise and bust broke out again in the hostelry; the citizens of Bethlehem went about their work; the registration proceeded—but the greatest event in the history of the world had taken place; that humble birth was dating a new and the final calendar, the tiny hands of that new-born child were throwing open the gates of new life to a whole human race. Christmas Day we keep as the anniversary of that event. Our lesson is a wondrous incident of that night.

The grouping in that famous painting Raphael's Sistine Madonna, is significant. Mary lifts her holy child on high, humble pride, but challengingly, as she meant, "Behold, the divinest thing of all!"

The Lesson Before Us

I. "IN THAT SAME COUNTRY"

The valley below Bethlehem, together with the surrounding hillsides, is one of the most fertile localities of southern Palestine. It was formerly guarded by a watch-tower, Eder, "tower of the flock" (Gen. 35: 21). It was the region where Jacob had lived his shepherd life, where Boaz and Ruth had wedded and where David, Old Testament type of the Messiah, had spent his youth.

From time immemorial its pastures had been reserved for the sheep that were to be sold in Jerusalem for Temple sacrifices. It is said to have been a honor to care for these devoted sheep and that the men were chosen on account of their peculiar fitness and piety.

II. VIGIL, VISITATION, VISION

It was in the clear, cool air of winter time, but of a mild, springlike, semi-tropical winter. The stars were ablaze. They took turns, the shepherds did, watching and sleeping. That was the custom. They had their fixed watches, as sailors do. The stillness of hill and valley, broken only by the bleating of the sheep, and the associations of these familiar fields, dear to every Jew, were over and around them.

Suddenly a vision came into their vision. The stars traced out angelic forms before their drowsy eyes and this they heard out of the sky:

"Have no fear. It is good news I am bringing you; news of a great joy for all the people: Today there has been born, in David's town, a Saviour, who the Anointed Lord. This will be proclaimed to you—you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger."

Then a song, almost too heavenly for mortal ears to hear:

"Glory to God, in high heaven!
On earth peace, among men who
please him!"

The celestial light faded from hill and plain, as the angels went away into the skies.

II. "LET US NOW GO TO BETHLEHEM"

Marveling, but full of simple trust, the shepherds had only one thought, to see the Babe for themselves. Climbing, therefore, with eager haste the little hill that Bethlehem crowned, they found the hostelry, and the mother, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in an ass' feeding-trough.

IV. "MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THY SALVATION"

As the narrative implies, those shepherds were surely men of faithful heart and godly life. They must have been members of that true Israel which included Mary and Joseph, Zacharias and Elisabeth, Simeon and Anna, representatives in that spiritually dark age of the saints of their nation in its brightest past. It is always to such that God comes with his most precious messages. Sin in the heart deafens the ears of the soul and beclouds its sight so that the man can't hear the voice from the sky and discern the angelic visitor.

In our day, for example, the good news that men have a Saviour who can and would save their sinful, burdened, distracted lives, is being widely, universally proclaimed. Yet we need not be surprised that this message so often goes lost on the empty air; for many a heart is impure, many a life unholy, and therefore many a soul hears not the word about this Saviour and his salvation. There will have been many shepherds out in the Judean fields that night watching their flocks, only to our little company did the voices come because they alone were fit and ready.

V. "KEEPING WATCH"

It is significant that the vision and the voices came to men who were faithfully and patiently performing their regular task and duty. Had they been drowsing through their appointed watches, they would surely have missed the marvel and the message. Vision is inseparable from vigil. In proportion as you shirk, neglect your life's fair, honest tasks will you miss the joy and sweetness of human existence. If in your Christian life you keep turning your back upon the Christian duty, obligation and vow, your visions of your Lord and your messages from him will be few and far between.

Longfellow has versified the story of the monk who for years had longed and prayed for a vision of the Crucified. The wondrous favor was on the point

of being granted—but at the moment when it was his duty to go and feed the poor who gathered daily at the convent gate. He hesitated, loath to miss the longed-for blessing—but then proceeds reluctantly to perform the dreary charity. When he returns to his cell he finds the Visitor waiting for him there, and hears him say:

"Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled."

Only the eyes of faith can see God, and faith is at least fidelity.

VI. OTHER STARRY SKIES

God's richest revelations do not always come in visions of the splendid night from the starry skies. The Glory filled even at this time the shed of a mean public-house in near-by Bethlehem, where an Israelitish woman was submitting to the motherhood sacrifice. Or the Presence dwelt without the glory in many a humble home of the land, where love was being given and duty fulfilled. God always takes care that no deserving soul shall miss the vision and the message. His herald angels are many and often they take the form and fashion of ordinary mortals; heavenly music as a rule is sung by human voices and to the tune of the noisy world.

VII. "LET US GO"

Visions are granted, almost always, to instruct us to go somewhere or do something, rather than to dazzle and enrapture. We read that almost before the heavens had closed upon the retreating angel host the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing."

A man will have a religious experience that fairly lifts him up into Paul's third heaven of bliss, but if thereafter he goes on living the same old faulty life as before, the experience has been vain and profitless for him. To be disobedient to our heavenly visions, how condemnable it must be in God's sight!

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ Today when there is so much war and peace talk, and so many other matters to cause concern, what is the specific, timely Christmas message?
- ¶ "On earth peace, good-will toward men" we have said and sung. How does it change this to adopt the revised translation, "among men in whom he is well pleased"?
- ¶ How was it that the shepherds so quickly understood the import of the angel's message? In this same connection, tell how the Sunday school teacher simplifies the task of the preacher?
- ¶ Can you tell of instances where you have received inspiration from the performance of some lowly task?

¶ How is the benefit we derive from worship always conditioned by a clear conscience—a clean heart, and the sense that we have not run away from some pressing duty?

¶ Why does inspiration so often fail to stir us to action—"Let us go?" What is always needed besides inspiration?

Notes and Comments

"Read the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke without any theory; read it as if you had never seen it before, and let the story tell itself to your heart. Let the simple majesty of its beauty and the ineffable music of its lines steal over your mind. . . And tell me if that sweet old story, so far from being a dream woven on the loom of faith, is not a calm, sober, and wonderfully restrained history! It is a leaf let fall from the Book of Life—as good an account as can be put into mortal words of the origin of such a Being as Jesus."—Newton.

Luke, always regardful of humble folk, omits the incident of the Wise-men and tells us how shepherds had first sight of the dawning Light of the world.

That the families should be enrolled at their ancestral homes was doubtless a concession to Jewish feeling on the part of Rome. A Jew never lost his tribal attachment (cp. Paul's claim to membership in the tribe of Benjamin).

The inn was evidently a public camping-out place, an enclosure with rude shelters for the people and sheds for their beasts (cp. our "tourist" camps"). The animals were not infrequently provided for under projecting rocks or in caves. Hence traditional pictures that represent the manger of the nativity as being in a cave are not fantastic.

*Nowhere else than in Bethlehem, hometown of King David, could the Greater David, Israel's Messianic ruler, be born. So had prophecy decreed (Micah 5: 2-4). Significant also the name Bethlehem, *beth lehem*, "house of bread"; town that was to give to the world its Bread of Life—"Bread of the world, in mercy broken!"*

"LONG, LONG AGO"

Winds through the olive-trees
Softly did blow
Round little Bethlehem
Long, long ago.

Sheep on the hillside lay
Whiter than snow,
Shepherds were watching them
Long, long ago.

Then from the happy sky
Angels bent low,
Singing their songs of joy,
Long, long ago.

For in a manger bed,
Cradled we know,
Christ came to Bethlehem
Long, long ago.

—Author unknown.

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

For the month of December, commercialism too often joins with Christianity and Christmas to shut out, at least to a considerable degree, the beautiful significance of the commemoration of the birth of Jesus. This habit has historical roots. It is easy enough to rationalize an orgy of gift-exchange by referring to the Wise-men of the East who came bringing gifts of frankincense and myrrh. It should be easy to remember the adoration of the simple shepherds who caught the significance of the supreme event.

Julian I, Bishop of Rome from A. D. 337 to 352, was successful in his contention to celebrate the birth of Jesus in the month of December. Learned advocates had supported the practice of celebrating the event for April or May. What effect did the selection of December have upon the character of the celebration? Two effects:

1. Various nations had instituted and practised a celebration of the passing of the shortest day of the year. These festivities became confused with Christmas rejoicings.

2. Romans were accustomed to the Saturnalia, a feast in honor of Saturn. This celebration was in December and was regarded as a time of unrestrained license and merriment for all classes, even for the slaves. Roman Christian converts sullied the Christmas celebration by practices to which they were accustomed while they yet were heathens.

It may be added that the use of the mistletoe, the Yule-log, and so forth, are relics of Druidism in England.

There are much warmth, beauty, affection and love, and sweet remembrances in the exchange of gifts at this Christmas season. I for one should not want to see the custom obliterated. Yet you and I would probably agree that the extreme commercialization upon the anniversary of the birth of our Saviour is out of place, and tends to obscure the thoughts of devotion and worship that should be called to the forefront of our minds and hearts as we approach and reach the Christmas season.

The outstanding difference between Christianity and other religions is that through Jesus Christ man recovers his union with God. Thus Paul says to the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The birth of Jesus, for us as his followers, is not so much attended by the pronouncement of any doctrine as by the commencement of a great life which shows us God. The work of Jesus is the

manifestation of the righteousness and love of God. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

We should be thinking of all this at Christmastime especially, so it seems to me. My own personal experience is that there is so much of festivity and rejoicing, family reunion, and the like, that the day comes and goes with too little realization of the opportunity and possibilities of meditation upon the abounding meaning of the coming of Jesus into the world, the Son of God becoming the Son of man, the Word being made flesh to dwell amongst us. What has been your experience?

The point I am trying to make is that Christianity has often been debased, and that by its friends. We must expect it from its enemies. Holy-days and holidays are etymologically the same. Holy days should be something far more than holidays. Last Sunday, we quoted Paul as saying, "For me to live is Christ." Christmas Day properly is an occasion for us to remember that the redemptive work of him whose advent we celebrate begins with us as individuals and reaches out into all spheres of our social activities.

Before My Class of Women

Cora F. Sherwood, Salem, Massachusetts

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

To those who have passed the period of youth it may seem that the Christmas story is an old one, with nothing new to say about it. Let us remember that *this* Christmas is one we have never lived through. This is the first Christmas for the thousands of new babies who have been born since a year ago. That very fact will make Christmas a time of interest to the parents and relatives of the little newcomer. Then, too, this is the first real Christmas for the other thousands who have been born again in 1937. So for all of us this Christmas is really new. We need to constantly remind ourselves that while times change, human needs and desires are not changing. So long as people live they will need food, shelter, clothes, fire and water and light. We who are Christians also believe that people will also always need peace, goodwill, hope, joy, love and God. So even to those to whom the Christmas observance is no longer new, there may still come the joy of the true meaning of it all.

Christmas and the children. Many years ago Dr. George A. Gordon said, in a part answer to the question, What is the greatest motive in the world? the following: "If one would know the power behind the reapers, the looms, the stores of the world; if one would know

the inspiration of miner and sailor, the man who lives in the heart of the earth and the man who spends his strength in the heart of the storms and tempests, you must look into the homes, into the cradles of the race. Men work that they may get bread and shelter and education and comfort for their children." This is something about a child that awakes the highest and best in people. We stand aghast at the hardness of those who would harm a little child. To love and serve a little child is about the most wonderful thing we can do in this world. A little child still leads the world. Our own little ones follow the Babe of Bethlehem in showing God to us. Some have said that when God wants a thing done, he sends a baby to do it. Tell your class that message this Christmas. The work of God is done not by big committees, big armies or senates and parliaments. It is done by the little babies who come into homes. "When a wrong must be righted, or a truth must be presented, or a people must be saved, God sends a baby into the world." How important to the future are the babies of 1937!

Christmas and the new Christians. When the angels went away from the shepherds did something about Christmas? They said to one another, "Let us go now . . . and see." And they went in haste. And when they had seen the angels they talked about it and thanked God for it. Doing something and expressing gratitude to God are two of the most valuable ways of growing a strong Christian life. Think over the names of those who have come into your church this year. Have they taken responsibility upon themselves for some service? Do they ever express their gratitude to God for what he has done for them? Do the shepherds went back to their work? Was their life was changed for them. They had seen a vision. They had a new meaning of life come to them. It was not enough for them to keep to themselves. They talked about it to Mary and Joseph and those gathered in that hill town for tax-registration. People wondered. Do they believe the shepherds? It was a loss if they did not. But the shepherds had given their testimony. They were happy for having heard, and seen, and told.

Christmas and grown-up Christians. We feel sure that those shepherds went back to their tasks with a new outlook on life. From then on they were more faithful, more reverent. They had a new idea of God and heaven. These things are more real to them. These shepherds were familiar with Hebrew religion and its promises and expectations. To what extent they may represent church members even more than new converts. For us, at Christmas is repeated anew the message of no fear, of great joy, of assurance that we may recognize Christ. The coming of Christ showed our glory. It brought a spirit of peace to earth. It was a promise of better things

Not all the promises of the angels or of Christ himself have been fulfilled. The kingdom comes slowly. It would come faster if Christians took more seriously the annual message of Christmas. Peace would come sooner on earth if God were given more glory and honor. Then, too, let us remember that this work of bringing fearlessness, joy, peace, good-will and praise to God is ours. It was not announced to the Jewish Sanhedrin that this new baby was to make the world different. The angels spoke and sang to humble people, not to the occupants of palaces. In spirit Jesus and the angels will come again to earth this year of 1937. The same offer will come of a way to peace on earth, of justice and good-will. Are we ready to receive them? Are we willing to try Jesus' way?

The Lesson Illustrated

Susanna G. Fisher

RIGHT-SEEING

The glory of the Lord shone round about them (Luke 2:9).

Ben Johnson said: "Some people will see more in a short stage-coach ride than others will in a trip round the globe. We need the seeing eye." A poet has put it thus:

"Two men looked out from prison bars;
One saw mud, the other stars."

THEY BELIEVED

They were sore afraid (Luke 2:9).

The shepherds had been scared by the angel of the Lord, just as any one of us

would have been, but they were not unbelievers. They believed what was told them, and decided after discussion to hurry to Bethlehem to add experience to knowledge. A good plan for all of us! Let us join them!

THEIR COMMON TASK

The shepherds returned (Luke 2:20).

We might suppose that after seeing such wonderful things—a vision of angels and then the infant Jesus, the shepherds would have been too full of ecstasy to think of their common task-work for that night. But they went right back to their lowly duties. The ecstasy of communion with Christ must never detain us from life's common task-work. Our visions are meant to inspire us for service. If they do not, they are meaningless.

LESSON XIII. DECEMBER 26. WHAT CHRISTIAN CONSECRATION MEANS

Mark 1:16-20; Philippians 1. (Verses printed, Phil. 1:12-26)

GENERAL THEME: CHRISTIAN CONSECRATION

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D.D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Psalm 108:1-6

KEY VERSE: For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—Phil. 1:21

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this shall turn to

my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

that there is always some little thing standing between us and perfection, which we can't, because we won't, give up.

Saturday. Christian Consecration Rewarded. Matt. 19:23-30. Secondary rewards frequently fail even the godliest living; but the reward of "hundred-fold" value, never. Why are we always wanting the secondary, the cheaper, the meaner rewards?

Sunday. A Set Purpose to Praise God. Ps. 108:1-6. It seems strange, yet it is true that even good habits need to be cultivated. Have you discovered, as the Psalmist had, what great blessings and benefits may be derived from worship—if one will but cultivate the habit?

At the Threshold of the Lesson

Farther on in this same epistle Paul writes, in substance, to the disciples at Philippi, "Brethren, I count not myself to have attained the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, but I am pressing on toward that goal." I think that we other Christians should have this same mind that was in Paul.

God cannot want us to undervalue or depreciate the attainment we have made in the Christian life. If we keep our eyes on Christ we shall always have plenty of incentive to humility; but if we cannot find in ourselves legible marks of true Christlikeness, there must be something wrong. Paul knew, and it would have been dishonest of him to deny, that the grace of God in Christ had been richly fruitful in his life. Sometimes he even boasts of it.

Yet joined to this honest pride in his Christian life there was an honest realization of much yet to be attained. He had

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. Christian Consecration. Phil. 1:12-26. "Always in every" (vs. 4). Paul was that kind of a man. A consecration that is *sometimes, in some*, is hardly consecration.

Tuesday. Loving Christ Supremely. Matt. 10:34-39. There is of course nothing selfish or vainglorious in Christ's demand for first place. Being what he is, he must come first, can have no other place in our hearts and lives.

Wednesday. Ready to Follow Christ. Mark 1:16-20. "Be sure you're right, and then go ahead." But that facing

Christ one is set in the right direction has never been questioned by saint or sinner. Then why not, "straightway?"

Thursday. Giving What We Have. Acts 3:1-10. The whole philosophy of Christian stewardship, of giving and serving, hinges upon the faith that Christ has the power to manifold, multiply, miraculously use. If we believe that, why should any of us hold back, or be idle?

Friday. The Price of Perfection. Matt. 19:16-22. We are in the habit of remarking that perfection is unattainable, impossible. The truth is, rather,

gotten so high up in this life that he could clearly discern its farther, larger possibilities. He nears the goal, but the goal recedes. In the Christian life, as in all life, the vision of the beyond, of the higher, is the prerequisite of progress. Christ says, "Come, follow me!" But he is, always on ahead. Consecration is not an act, it is a process.

The Lesson Before Us

I. THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

It was written from Rome, during the two years' imprisonment mentioned by Luke at the close of Acts (28:30); that is, within the years 61-63. The immediate occasion of the epistle was the arrival at Rome of Epaphroditus, bringing the Philippian gift (4:10). The messenger will also have reported to Paul the springing-up in the church at Philippi of rifts, a tendency to party-spirit. So there are gentle warnings and admonitions scattered through the letter.

Gentle, for the apostle seems to have had a particular affection for this congregation in Macedonia. There are many evidences of this in the letter. The salutations are more than friendly; he appreciates their interest in his welfare; they are constantly in his mind—and prayers; on his heart. Therefore, consecrated as they are he wants them to be still nearer perfection; thus making full his joy in them (2:2).

It is a real, personal letter, not a theological treatise in epistolary form, like Romans or Hebrews; nor an encyclical, like Ephesians or James. "It is the most spontaneous and unaffected of the Pauline epistles. It rambles along just as any real letter would, with personal news and personal feelings, and outbursts of personal affection as between tried friends" (Hayes).

It makes refreshing reading. It is free from uncalled-for criticism and fault-finding, full of praise and joy. Bengel makes its thesis, "I rejoice; rejoice ye!" What a fine final note from the old gospel war-horse, worn, broken in body, and a prisoner in great, godless, heartless Rome!

The word and thought of Christ Jesus pervade the letter, perhaps more than any other of Paul's writings, yet with a fine reserve he suggests himself as an example of Christian life and action. He repeatedly reminds them, however, of what he is, a would-be perfect Christian, one who is striving with all his might toward that goal. The letter is then a challenge to them to come and make the race with him.

II. "BONDS IN CHRIST"

We are considering "Christian consecration." Now the consecrated Christian is so given to interfere with that service. In verse 12 the apostle laughs in his sleeve, as it were. The Jews, to stop him from preaching Jesus, had had

him imprisoned. He was a prisoner here at Rome. But notwithstanding (that word "notwithstanding" much concerns us in this lesson), the gospel was being immensely furthered by his imprisonment. The streets and law courts of Rome, even though he trod them handcuffed, were a better pulpit than the schoolroom of Tyrannus at Ephesus or Mars Hill at Athens.

Rome was the center of the civilized world, the melting-pot of nations and religions, where the gospel would find its largest opportunity. Paul was on the whole a favored prisoner; yet, following a common practice, he was always chained-up to a soldier guard. This again spelled opportunity. He had plenty of close-ups with these soldier guards—to tell them about Jesus and the cross. They would be soon transferred, to some far-off province, there to repeat Paul's story. From person to person, that is the gospel way. Bonds don't make any difference—provided the party of the first part is consecrated.

III. HEARTENING FROM BONDS

Real Christian consecration like Paul's throws out a spirit of confidence, of heartening, into the Christian community. Verse 14 implies that faint-heartedness and inactivity pervaded the Christian community at Rome when our apostle arrived there. The sight of this famous disciple, courageously bearing his persecution and calmly going on with his missionary work, hampered as he was, shamed them, aroused them to activity and gave them a new confidence in preaching Christ. Maybe those Roman Christians had not yet realized what a big and glorious thing the gospel of Christ was; Paul was showing them, by his Christian patience and gumption.

IV. "NOTWITHSTANDING, CHRIST IS PREACHED"

Christian consecration commits one to the faith that all things work together for the good of the Kingdom. A large and demanding faith, indeed. In verses 15-18 there are references to parties and divisions in the Roman church not unlike those that had troubled Paul's own missionary congregations. He does not specify, but probably "Judaizers" were among them—and they would not forget what Paul had done at Antioch and at the Jerusalem Council.

A half a dozen years before this Paul's tone would have been different; he would have had some plain—possibly sharp—words to say. But he has learned "how to be abased" (3:12); doesn't mind any more their attacks and jealousies. They preach Christ, all these partisans; that's better than nothing; and when the feeling and disputes have cleared away, maybe the cause of Christ here at Rome will be none the worse for it—"and therein I do rejoice." We recall Jesus' answer to his overjealous disciples, in regard to the exorcist.

V. A PERSONAL NOTE

Verses 19 and 20 are paraphrased Stevens (Messages of the Bible), "I know that this trial (opposition of factionists) which they are causing will result in my spiritual profit, in answer to your prayers and through grace of the Spirit. And thus shall realize my eager longing and confidence that my efforts will not be defeated, that I shall honor Christ with my life, whether I give it up in his service or live to labor on in his cause."

"For me, to live is Christ" (vs. 2). No words could have better and more concisely stated Paul's credo, and, incidentally, his idea of Christian consecration. Tyndale translates the words "Christ is to me lyfe." Goodspeed has "For, as I see it, living means Christ and dying something even better"; Moffatt, "As life means Christ to me, death means gain." The apostle is evidently thinking not so much of Christ as the source of life—though that was true for him—as of the experience and interests of living. Life was for him so full of Christ, so preoccupied with him, that "Christ" sums it up.

What follows (vss. 22b-26) is almost genial; "Well, I don't know; I can't quite make up my mind. I'd like to and be with the Lord, for I'm beginning to feel that I am through (cf. 2 Tim. 4:7); but on the other hand, I'd like to stay a little while longer; especially so that I might visit you again. You be glad to see me, wouldn't you?" (vs. 26).

Likeness to Christ is the Christian's goal. Paul is on his way to that goal. Even now after all his striving he humbly feels that it's a good way off; he's doggedly at it, spurring even, confident of winning. "You others," he says, "keep me company around the track." F. C. Baur wrote: "The distinguishing mark of Christian discipleship is not complete righteousness, but effort to attain it."

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

- ¶ What has been your experience with "Consecration Meetings"? How might they be made more effective?
- ¶ Might the Communion be made more of a consecration service than it is? Yet does it now have any meaning for you?
- ¶ Suggest other characteristics of a thoroughly consecrated life than those mentioned in our discussion.
- ¶ Have hard experiences in your life dedicated you more heartily to Christ?
- ¶ From your knowledge of Adoniram Judson—how did his hard experiences in Burma affect him?
- ¶ What other Christians have preached Christ by their bonds? Can you think of Christians who have died, figuratively speaking?

Mark Hopkins at one end of a log and a student at the other; Paul at one end of a chain and a Roman soldier at the other; how about you and someone to whom you are intimately related.

Notes and Comments

Can you be a Christian proudly humble, thoroughly conscious of your individual importance in the plan and work of Christ's Kingdom, yet realizing the importance of other Christians? Paul was like that, because he had given himself utterly to Christ (Rom. 12:1,2). There is a Christian self-righteousness that is not hateful because it is the righteousness of Christ in the believer.

Rome is one of the most distracting cities in the world, it has so many ghosts and so many centuries and cultures center there. But in Rome the Christian can never forget Paul. When you look

down from any one of its many elevations upon ruins and historic structures your eyes turn to where the apostle's "own hired dwelling" must have been.

The Roman Empire was an embodiment of power—"Rome was the whole world and all the world was Rome"—its eagle a symbol of human almightiness. Paul was a little, weak, Jewish man, under arrest; an itinerant missionary of an insignificant despised sect, whose emblem was a shameful cross. But he was indwelt by the power of the Holy Spirit. Today the sovereignty of Rome is only a remembrance of history; that Eternal City only a museum of antiquities.

Paul's gospel, on the other hand, has conquered the inhabited earth as Rome never did; and everything beautiful and notable in that city is crowned with the same cross in which Paul gloried, which Rome held in such contempt.

II. The influence of our Christian faith in this social environment:

Individual salvation.

Service to others.

Is it worth "selling" to our acquaintances?

Incidental or permeative in our thinking and doing?

Its effect on our home life.

On our work life.

On our play life.

On our political life.

III. Our attitude toward mechanisms to develop faith for expression in our social environment:

Toward the church.

Toward religious education.

Toward private meditation and devotions.

Consecration means, I take it, that we rise in our faith and devotion to the great heights attained by Paul, so that we can say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Can we do it?

A very ugly character in a story I recently read comes to my mind. "Horsey" was his name—his nickname. He was called Horsey because his friends thought he was a horse-thief. He had never stolen a horse, but they all thought he would if he ever were presented with the opportunity. By exact opposites, I think of people who would do good if they were given the opportunity. In any supreme test, they would stand for God and the things of righteousness. They are called Christian not because they are habitually and noticeably exemplifying the consecration of Christian Paul, but because we have the conviction that the purpose and stamina are there, and will show themselves in due season. I have come to believe that many Christians are far better than they seem to be. Yet I must say there seems to be a hiatus between our daily life and the consecration outlined by hill-top Paul.

Before My Class of Women

Cora F. Sherwood, Salem, Massachusetts

CHRISTIAN CONSECRATION

If we knew nothing more about the devoted interest of Paul in his work, this passage from Philippians selected for our lesson today would enable us to reconstruct much of his life. The unselfish interest in the church at Philippi; his rejoicing at having the gospel of Christ proclaimed whether it was the way he would do it or not; his willingness to live or die; all these show a remarkable degree of Christian consecration.

It is a wonderful thing to be so interested in other people and so devoted to helping them that it makes little difference what happens to one's own self. Paul had done this. Sometimes we know of individuals who have followed far in

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Charles C. Stillman, Columbus, Ohio

CHRISTIAN CONSECRATION

It is very apparent that Paul was far above his associates in faith, devotion and consecration. That explains why his name has come down to us as the great apostle. The situation out of which grows this lesson text is of extraordinary interest. Paul is in a Roman jail. Epaphroditus was sent by the church-members of Philippi as a messenger to Paul, bearing gifts which the apostle is acknowledging in this letter of thanks. His love for Christ and his solicitude for his Christian brothers rise to almost unbelievable heights.

I said Paul was far above his associates. It is so, is it not? The Philippian church had many strong qualities, but it is evident from a careful reading of this letter that there were a good many squabbles and jealous bickerings among the members (maybe I had better not yield to the urge to say something about our churches of today in this regard!). With the great apostle, Christ was all-in-all. This is virtually what he said, so it seems to me: "I have these alternatives. I can die and go to meet my Lord; or I can live and try to be of help to you in mastering your temptations. My real preference is to pass on to heaven, where I am sure of living with the Master. But, dear Christian friends, I feel that you need me, and I therefore yearn to stay here for a while, solely to encourage and strengthen my brethren in the faith. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

This is a kind of consecration about which we hear little in our hectic life. Hectic life? What about the hectic days

of Paul? What have we in our day? Well, we have wars, poverty, governmental confusion, taxes, disease, exploitation, temptations, selfishness. True enough, but all of these drawbacks in aggravated form were prevalent in the days of the first century when this great man, by faith almost unprecedented, made Christ his passion and his people his consuming love. By the standards of today, Paul was a fanatic.

When the call of Macedonia was heard, Philippi was the first place visited by Paul. He preached in the open. His work brought him into an altercation with some commercial fakirs. He was hustled out of the city in ignominious manner. He did many things which we in our dignified fashion consider not altogether respectable.

The good tidings of faith were to Paul his meat and drink, his thought day in and day out. He was consecrated. And what does "consecrated" mean? It means that he was set apart, dedicated, given completely over to the service of God.

What does consecration mean to the Christian of the twentieth century in the United States of America? I suppose the purpose of this lesson is to cause you and me to think about that question. Will you write your own essay, based upon this outline:

I. Of necessity, if for no other reason, we must recognize our social environment:

Home.

Work, or school.

Companions.

Prevailing standards of conduct.

Political (state) obligations.

Bread and butter problem.

Social philosophy.

his footsteps. Such people cannot live to themselves or their own families. Such persons were Mrs. Henry Clay Trumbull, wife of the former editor of the *Sunday School Times*, and her father and mother, Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, of Hartford, Conn. When Mr. Gallaudet was a young theological student about the year 1814 he became interested in the case of Alice Cogswell, deaf mute daughter of a loved Hartford doctor. This bright little girl had none of the advantages now available for the education of the deaf in our country. While on his vacation he saw this girl playing with other children in her father's garden. He tried to teach her the written word for "hat" represented the *thing*, hat, which he held in his hand. This simple incident marked the beginning of the life-work of Thomas Gallaudet. He went to Europe to learn the methods of teaching these handicapped people. Like Paul he preached Christ wherever he went. In Paris he preached a series of sermons to the English-speaking residents of the French capital. That was the beginning of the American Chapel in Paris. Back in this country this young minister went to the great centers of population pleading the cause of the deaf and dumb and afterward started the American Asylum for their instruction. He wrote books for children that were translated into twenty-two different languages. He was one of the foremost to be interested in education of women. He tried to get Bible study and teaching into our colleges. He was interested in teaching for the blind. He made successful experiments in educating the mentally underprivileged. He always tried to apply Christ's message to all lines of life. It was said of him, "That Mr. Gallaudet never rose in the morning without having in his mind or on his hands some extra duty of philanthropy to perform. His benevolence was of that practical, universal and preventive sort, that it can be followed by everybody every day in something; and if followed by everybody, and begun early and persevered in, would change the whole aspect of society in a single generation. . . . He did not muse in solitude on human misery, but sought out its victims, and did something for their relief. . . . He knew from his own heart, that we love that which we strive to benefit, and he was therefore anxious that every man should be found doing good . . . to somebody who stood in need of such personal help." In all his work his wife shared an unusual part. One of the first students of the first school for deaf mutes in this country, this superior woman filled her place with such ease and dignity in spite of her handicaps that she attracted attention from even across the ocean. After her husband died she took an intelligent and active interest in the work of two of her sons who carried on further the work of their father. One was interested in

providing separate church privileges for the deaf and dumb of great cities and the other ventured on a plan for securing full college education for deaf mutes. One of the daughters of this remarkable couple was Alice Cogswell Gallaudet, who became Mrs. Trumbull. Having a deaf-mute mother she used the sign-language. The language of signs demands the freest expression of thought and feeling. With words it is possible to say one thing and mean another. With signs it is different. Hence Alice Gallaudet was trained to express her loving nature. She radiated light and love, and won love for herself. This habit of living for others without a thought of self was carried throughout her whole life. In her husband's missionary Sunday school work and his chaplaincy in the Civil War she was his faithful, courageous supporter; in his more cultured life as an editor she was his kindly, sympathetic companion and mother to his children.

Information regarding Gallaudets and Mrs. Trumbull adapted from "Life and Light," a biographical sketch

Devotion to others, serving them in Christ's name and for his sake: this is Christian consecration. It is something within the reach of all.

The Lesson Illustrated

Susanna G. Fisher

THREE KINDS OF CONSECRATION

And to die is gain (Phil. 1:21).

One has imagined he saw three men kneeling at the foot of the cross. The first said, as he beheld the suffering Saviour, "May it be to me to prevent crucifixion." He looked up, and saw a tear on the face of him who hung there. Another said, "May it be to me to ease crucifixion." He looked up, and saw a frown upon the brow of him who hung there. The third said, "May it be to me to share crucifixion." He looked up, and saw a smile upon the face of Christ.

ALL KINDS OF CONSECRATION

So now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death (Phil. 1:20).

A minister heard a housemaid remark that it is not difficult to "pray without ceasing." "What; when you have so many things to do?" "Why, sir, the more I have to do, the more I can pray. When I first open my eyes in the morning, I pray, Lord, open the eyes of my understanding; and while I am dressing, I pray that I may be clothed with the robe of righteousness; and when I have washed me, I ask for the washing of regeneration; and as I begin to work, I pray that I may have strength equal to my day; when I begin to kindle up the fire, I pray that God's work may revive in my soul; and as I sweep out the

house, I pray that my heart may be cleansed from all its impurities; and while preparing and partaking of breakfast, I desire to be fed with the hidden manna and the sincere milk of the Word; and as I am busy with the little children, I look up to God as my Father and pray for the spirit of adoption that I may be to his child, and so on, all day; everything I do furnishes me with a thought for prayer."

HIS WAY IS SUFFICIENT

Prepare ye the way of the Lord (Matt. 1:3).

Surely it is no accidental thing that practically all the starving die in the lands where the Christ's influence has nearly gone. We have looked out on great Hindu famines, we have looked out on great Buddhist famines, we have looked out on great Confucian famines, we have looked out on great Mohammedan famines; we have not looked out on a great Christian famine; for wherever his influence has gone, even on the plain of the common necessities of human life, Jesus Christ is sufficient for the needs of all men.—Robert E. Speer.

SCARRED HANDS

So that my bonds in Christ are manifest (Phil. 1:13).

"Adoniram Judson, after undergoing unspeakable sufferings, while lying in stocks in prison for months, gained his freedom, and then asked the King of Burma for permission to go to a certain city to preach his gospel. 'I am willing for a dozen preachers to go to that city,' replied the king, 'but not you. Not with those hands. My people are not foolish enough to listen to and follow your words, but they will not be able to resist those scarred hands.' Those scarred hands were authoritative."—From "The Christ of the Mount," by E. Stanley Jones.

FRUIT-BEARING

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1:11).

Have you ever seen an old apple-tree that was bent, gnarled, and scarred, with limbs twisted and broken, but bearing as sweet apples as you ever ate? And do you not forget all the blemishes of the old tree and regard it with mingled pity and admiration for its faithful fruit-bearing despite its scars? And you probably have seen another tree, pretentious in its luxuriant foliage, yet as barren as a post. God judges a man, not by the profession of his lips, but by the occupation of his soul.—Gordon Hurlbutt, in "Wings and Wings."

TAKE COURAGE!

The legions of darkness are strong, but they may be, And Satan holds forth on land and sea; But right is of God, and undaunted is His power. Take courage!

—Thomas C. Clark.

A Worship Service Program

Prepared by NEWTON H. CARMAN

PRELUDE. Quiet music, while the classes take their places. Pianist plays introduction or chord for opening hymn, the school standing at signal, and remaining standing through "Hymn of the Surrendered Heart."

OPENING HYMN. "When Morning Gilds the Skies" (one verse). This should be memorized. ("Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart" is also appropriate.)

CALL TO WORSHIP.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

I will commune with God in his holy place.

I will go down into the valleys of service with Christ.

HYMN OF THE SURRENDERED HEART.

"I Would Be True" is suggested. School is then seated.

THE WORSHIP STORY.

First Sunday. A foreglimpse of the quarter's study.

Succeeding Sundays. A brief summary passage of the lesson can be used, as above, read by pupil, and using Bible picture, if possible.

Closing Sunday. Summary of the quarter's study.

PRAYER (by pastor or trusted leader) suited to the above service. (School stands for this prayer and through "Prayer in Unison.")

HYMN. Appropriate to the theme of the day.

PRAYER (in unison). Impress us with thy love and power, O our God, that in the spirit of thy Christ, our Saviour, we may study, and work, and play. Amen.

MUSIC, while school passes to classes in orderly fashion.

CLASS SESSIONS.

MUSIC, while school returns from classes to their seats.

NECESSARY ANNOUNCEMENTS. Bulletin-boards should be used as much as possible, as excessive "announcing" detracts from the spirit of worship.

WORSHIP THROUGH GIVING.

School Stands and Sings. "I Give Thee but Thine Own," or "I Gave My Life for Thee," while a representative from each class brings forward the offering of his class. They stand quietly before table on which offering has been placed, while the school offers its

Prayer of Gratitude. "Our Father in heaven, Jesus has taught us that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that thou dost love a cheerful giver. We thank thee that we may share in the blessedness of giving. And we pray that as thou art the great and loving giver of good gifts to thy children, so we may share thy divine generosity in giving to others. Accept and use these gifts of our hearts, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

HYMN. School standing through "Closing Hymn."

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION AND INTERCESSION. A class to which it has been assigned in advance offers a brief, pointed prayer, growing out of the experience of the worship and the class session.

CLOSING HYMN OF PERSONAL DEDICATION. "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee," or "O Jesus, I Have Promised." (Sing reverently and quietly, as a closing prayer.)

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WE CAN STILL BELIEVE IN GOD

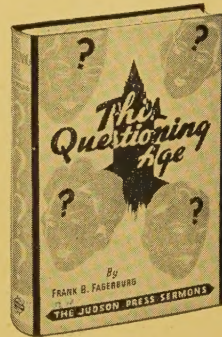
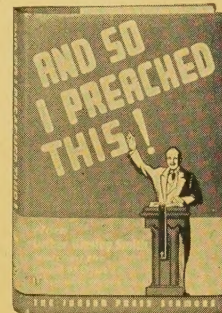
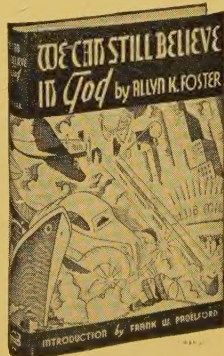
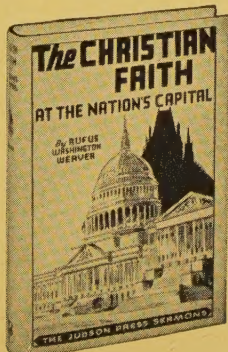
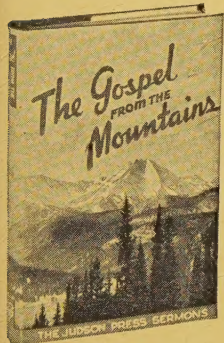
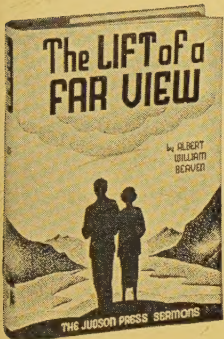
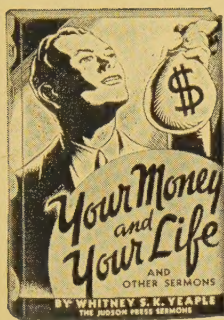
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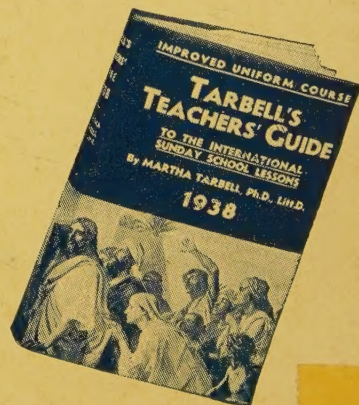
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